CHOICE. CHIPPY. CHEERFUL. CHEAP.

SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY G. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

NO. 471. FOR WEEK ENDING JANUARY 8TH, 1898. [ONE PENNY.

Beecham's Pastime Parcel

BIG VALUE FOR ONE SHILLING, WITH A PRIZE COMPETITION FOR £100.

The Proprietor of Beecham's Pills, knowing that most readers of his Advertisements look for something startling at this time of the year, has made up a SHILLING PARCEL, which will surprise and please all those fortunate enough to get it.

CONTENTS:

TWELVE BRIGHT BOOKS, forming a delightful collection of tasteful and thrilling tales, by various authors of renown, in all 28 complete stories, set in good type, making nearly 600 pages of fascinating reading, and enlivened by over 300 illustrations.

THREE EXCELLENT SONGS, very tuneful, with complete music accompaniments, composed expressly for Beecham's Pastime Parcel, entitled, "To My Beloved," by ERNEST BROWNE; "A Winter Song," and "Sir Harold the Hunter," by A. G. COLBORN.

ONE BEAUTIFUL ETCHING, on India Paper, representing the charming picture, "A Mother of Three," by HENRIETTA RONNER, suitable for and well worth framing, being equal, if not superior, to anything sold by the trade for one shilling.

ONE MOST ARTISTIC TEAR-OFF CALENDAR FOR 1898. The views on this are very pleasing, and no one will be tired of looking at them each day in the year.

THE £100 PRIZE COMPETITION. This is quite a remarkable puzzle competition. Entirely novel and of a fascinating character. It has been arranged in connection with "Beecham's Oracle," an assorted supply of which, ***expressly designed for this competition,*** will be included in each parcel. The burning of these mysterious puzzle Oracles will develop various secrets, which each purchaser of Beecham's Pastime Parcel is invited to unravel, and so stand to win the prize of £100. One competition paper (containing all particulars and rules) is enclosed in each parcel.

The demand for the Pastime Parcel will be very heavy, and, of course, the supply is limited. All applications will be dealt with as quickly as possible, the parcels being sent per parcel post, postage paid. Do not be uneasy about a little delay, as the competition will be open until February 5th, 1898.

Any reader of this paper ordering ten parcels to be sent together to the same address will be presented with a complete set of Beecham's Music-Folio (Vols. 1 to 12), the usual price of which is 2s. 6d.

Apply early, enclose Postal Order or Stamps for ONE SHILLING, writing your name and address clearly to

The Proprietor of BEECHAM'S PILLS, St. Helens, Lancashire.

CUT OUT THIS ORDER FORM, IT WILL SAVE YOU WRITING A LETTER.

To the Proprietor of BEECHAM'S PILLS, St. Helens, Lancashire.

Please send _____ *(Name)*

_____ *(Address)*

(No.) _____ *Pastime Parcels. Amount enclosed* _____

Digitized by Google

"Its food value is double that of Bread made from ordinary wheaten flour."—Lancet.

HOVIS BREAD

will not only help to improve your digestion and consequently your health, but will also bring back that energetic and happy feeling of good health. Man does not live a natural life, so a good portion of a natural food, in the shape of HOVIS, at each meal will largely counteract the bad influence that modern life has upon the health and digestive organs. This is not an idle remark, but a proved statement, daily being verified.

HOVIS is baked and sold by all good class Bakers. No loaf genuine unless stamped HOVIS. 6d. and 1/- samples of Bread and Biscuits sent on receipt of stamps by

S. FITTON & SON, Millers, Macclesfield.

MAKE FRUIT WINES AT HOME.

Ask for MASON'S.

MAKERS OF MASON'S EXTRACT OF HERBS. THE VERY BEST.

MAKERS OF MASON'S EXTRACT OF HERBS. BEWARE OF IMITATIONS.

MASON'S GINGER WINE ESSENCE.

A Sixpenny Bottle will, in six minutes, make sixty glasses of Delicious, Non-Alcoholic Wine. Agents Wanted.

NEWBALL & MASON, NOTTINGHAM.

MASON'S (NOTTINGHAM) COFFEE ESSENCE (THE BEST MADE)

MASON'S WINE ESSENCES

are made in all Fruit Flavours, Ginger, Lemon, Orange, Blackberry, etc.

YOU WON'T BE DISAPPOINTED.

The Best Hair Dye

in the World for Lashes, Eyebrows, and Hair on the Head, with Moustache and Beard. For Ladies' Hair and for all Colours. Had at 3s. 6d., post 3s. 9d., of ALEX. ROSS, 62 Theobald's Road, High Holborn, London, W.C. Spanish Cantharides for fallen hair, 3s. 6d. 5s. 6d. & 10s. 6d.

TRILENE REGD TABLETS THE ONLY CURE for STOUTNESS Registered by GOVERNMENT Price 2/6

ALL FAT PEOPLE

Readily **Reduce Weight** and **Cure Corpulency Permanently** by taking **TRILENE TABLETS** (Regd.) for a few weeks. They are very agreeable, harmless, and never fail to PRESERVE both HEALTH and FIGURE without change of diet. **Reduction begins immediately.**

An English Countess writes: "*Your Trilene Tablets act admirably*"

SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

MR. CLAUDE CARTER, of Thorn House, Johnstone, N.B., says: "Your Tablets much reduced my weight and I have been waiting to see if it was permanent, and so it has proved."

MR. CANHAM, 87, Alexandra Road, Norwich, says: "Tablets cured my wife two years ago of extreme stoutness. It has never returned.

MARION TAYLOR, of Church Farm, St. James, Halesworth, says: "Have lost quite two stone."

A. PEEL, of Darley Hydro, Matlock, writes: "They have reduced and benefited me a good deal."

MISS MONEY, Broadway House, Newbury. "I am greatly reduced in weight."

MR. G. LOVE, 4, Kirk Street, Peterhead. "I think them wonderful not only to reduce fat but as a medicine."

Send **2/6** to **THE TRILENE ASSOCIATION, 66, Finsbury Pavement, London, E.C.**

NOSE MACHINE.

This is a contrivance by which the short cartilage of the nose is pressed into shape by wearing the instrument an hour daily for a short time. Price 10/6, sent free for stamps. ALEX ROSS, 62, Theobald's Road, London, opposite Bedford Row. Est. 1850. Parcel free from observation.

ATLAS LOCKSTITCH MACHINE.

Works by hand or treadle. Guaranteed 4 years. Equal in quality and size to any machine. To ensure satisfaction, we will send machine on receipt of 5/- P.O. for ONE MONTH'S TRIAL. Balance can be paid 5/- Monthly. Call or write for designs and Samples of work.

39/-

THE ATLAS SEWING MACHINE CO., 188B, High St., Camden Town, London, N.W. 63 Seven Sisters Road, N.; 14 High Rd., Kilburn

£20

Hairdressers fitted up. Estimates free.

Tobacconists Commencing. See Illd. Guide (250 pages) 3d. How to open a cigar store, £20 to £2,000. **Tobacconists Outfitting Co.**, 186, Euston Road, London. The largest and original house (30 years reputation. Mgr., H. Myers.

FREE

Send stamped addressed envelope for Price List and receive free. Our Allies Gold Imitation Diamond Pin, in case, for Lady or Gent. *Send four stamps to cover packing, etc.*

RENNIE & CO., Dept. 11, Croy Place, Glasgow.

7/6 THE "WAVERLEY" SALOON GUN. WITH 100 BALL CARTRIDGES. **7/6**

THE "WAVERLEY."

100 Birds or Rabbits can be killed with this gun at a cost of 1/-. Will penetrate a one-inch deal board at 75 to 100 yards; each gun bears the legal proof-mark. Price Lists free. W. R. JACKSON, Arms Manufacturer, 8, Park Avenue Rd., Tottenham, Middlesex. Mention *Short Stories*.

EPPS'S

GRATEFUL—COMFORTING.

COCOA

WADE'S WONDERFUL OFFER

A WATCH FOR NOTHING.

For particulars send for one of my illustrated catalogues. To induce you to send for this I guarantee to supply one of my half-hoop "**Black Star**" **Diamond 18-carat Gold**-cased Ladies' Rings for the nominal sum of **1/6**. The ring is equal in appearance to one costing 5 guineas. The watch I give away free of charge and the list price for it is **40/-**, being composed of Solid Silver cases, and is a reliable time-keeper. This offer is strictly genuine, and I have thousands of testimonials thanking me for my free gifts. Send at once enclosing Postal Order for **1/6**, and string size of finger, and address

W. W. WADE,

Gold Exchange, Hammersmith, London, W.

DR. MACKENZIE'S

Deliciously and expensively perfumed, the most luxurious Soap in the World. Produces a most lovely complexion, eradicates spots, pimples, and all imperfections, makes the skin exquisitely clear, and produces the healthy bloom so much desired. It is absolutely harmless, and each tablet is accompanied by a medical certificate.

ARSENICAL

6D. & 1S. PER TABLET.

This Soap prevents the growth of superfluous hairs, removes wrinkles, feeds the skin. You can get it at all the Stores and first-class Chemists. *The Family Doctor* says it is the most economical beautifier known to Modern Dermatology. It clears away all pimples, spots, redness, or roughness, and makes the skin smooth and clear as a baby's. Use it in the bath and for all Toilet purposes; it is most delicious. For irritable or sensitive skins it is matchless and delightfully soothing.

MADAME PATTI sends her best thanks for Dr. Mackenzie's Arsenical Toilet Soap, which she finds most excellent—Craig-y-nos Castle, South Wales.

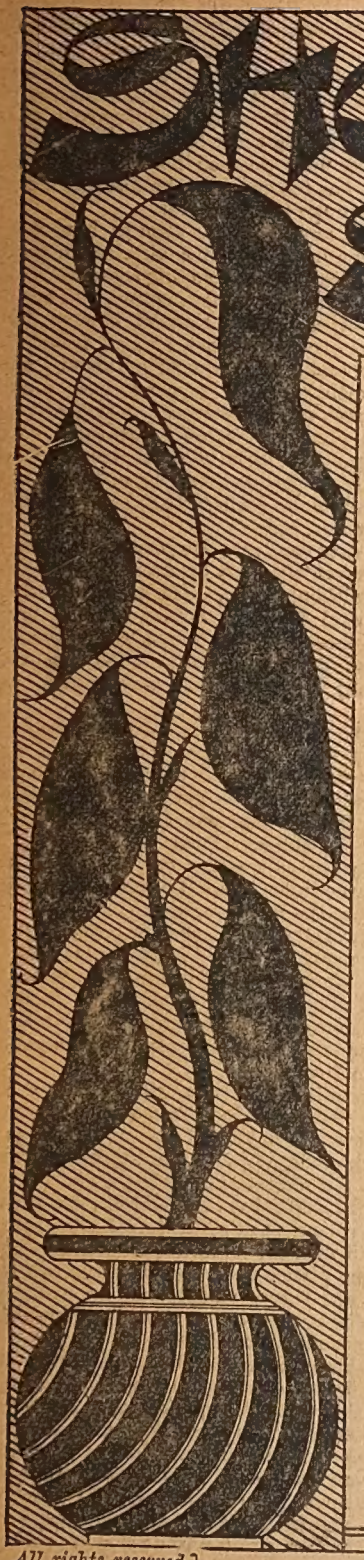
SOAP.

Use also Dr. MACKENZIE'S "ARSICAL" Face Lotion. *Beware of many Imitations. Have Dr. MACKENZIE'S or none.*

Advertisements should be sent to "Short Stories" Advertisement Department, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

SHORT STORIES

Edited By C. Arthur Pearson



HIS ONE ROMANCE.

For the last thirty years, Herr Adolph Lebrecht, the registrar, had made his way to the office at precisely the same moment, and by exactly the same route, every morning of his life, with the exception of Sundays and public holidays. He always crossed the road at the same point, and the only deviation he ever made was entirely dependent on the weather. On fine mornings he stood for the space of two minutes to inhale the fresh breeze from the river when he reached the middle of the bridge; but when it was wet he went straight on, and occupied the extra time in divesting himself of his goloshes and mackintosh. For the registrar was not a strong man, and he had no one but his landlady to nurse him when he was ill.

So unfailing was his punctuality, that people on the route knew the time to a moment when he came in sight. He was a small, elderly man, of very ordinary appearance, and yet no one was better known or more noticed in that particular part of the city.

The children knew whether they were early or late for school by the place in which they met him, and old Frau Schmidt used to start her husband off to his place of business directly she saw the registrar coming round the corner. He thus unconsciously became a kind of human chronometer by which many others regulated their movements.

But there had once been a short period in which they would have found him a broken reed.

Five-and-twenty years ago, soon after he came to the city from his provincial home, when he was young and not bad-looking, with a tender longing for love and a passionate admiration for beauty hidden under his shy, awkward exterior, Adolf Lebrecht had once loitered in the path of duty and had suffered thereby.

For some inexplicable reason he had turned down a quiet side street one bright summer's morning, and as he passed one of the small villas of which the street was composed, he was struck by two quaint little plaster figures which adorned the gate posts.

They represented a grotesque, gnome-like little man and woman, the latter being in an angry attitude with a hand upraised, ready to strike her sulky companion.

Herr Lebrecht was amused and was just going to shake his fist at the little plaster shrew, when the fear of looking ridiculous made him cast an anxious look

All rights reserved.]

Digitized by Google

round to see if there were any spectators. It was a lovely morning, the blackbirds were singing as sweetly as they did in his old home, and the air was perfumed with the scent of the hawthornes and laburnums. No one seemed to be astir but himself, and with one more look at the funny little figures he started to walk on, when his eyes fell on a side window which looked out into the little garden.

He was very short-sighted, and so far had not liked to spoil his appearance by wearing spectacles, still there was no mistaking a girl's figure at the window in question. The laburnum seemed to mingle with her golden hair, and he thought her sweet lips were parted in a smile, for he could see the pearly teeth between them; her sleeves were turned back, leaving the round white arms bare to the elbow.

He was much too shy to look long at this charming apparition, so he hurried on, but in his confusion nearly tumbled over his walking stick that had got between his legs. Hot and flurried he pursued his way for a few yards, then the demons of curiosity and vanity got the better of his good manners, and he turned to see if she were still looking. Yes, there she was; if anything, she was leaning further out of the window, smiling sweetly, he felt sure; and he could catch a glimpse of her white arms through the moving foliage.

On that memorable morning he was seven minutes late at the office! But he met the inquiries and the wondering glances of the other men with a callous indifference, at which no one was more surprised than himself; and though he went conscientiously through the day's work, the dry documents seemed embellished with feathery sprays of golden laburnum, and the silence of the office broken by the sweet notes of the blackbird's song.

He was far too shy to make any inquiries as to who the girl was, and for some days he even lacked the courage to repeat his morning's escapade. He felt as if the passers-by would question his right to be there, as they knew his road lay in a different direction.

At last the longing to see his unknown beauty mastered even his fears, and the bright sunshine tempted him to turn boldly aside, so, with beating heart and flushed cheeks, he made his way to the enchanted spot.

His valour was rewarded, for there she was, and this time he looked long and earnestly. He noted that her hair was dressed high on her small head, and that her sleeves were again carefully turned back as she bent over the flowers growing in the balcony beneath her. It seemed to him as if she blushed under his admiring gaze, and his brain was in a whirl, for no woman had ever blushed under *his* eyes before. He boldly smiled back and had made up his mind to raise his hat before leaving, but, frightened at his own temerity, he checked his hand half way and put his tie straight instead.

From that day forward the registrar passed the villa regularly every morning, but he arranged his walk so that he arrived punctually at the office as the clock struck the first stroke of eight. The object of his adoration seemed to be of equally methodical habits, for she was always at the window ready to greet him and remained there till he was out of sight. This fact rejoiced his heart, and he also noted with pleasure that she dressed in a quaint, artistic style of her own, regardless of the disfiguring fashions of the day.

In any other case he would have censured such waste of time in a young girl, but one day he noticed that she had a little watering-pot in her hand, and, as he was devoted to flowers himself, he hailed another mutual taste and loved her the better for it. Then again, vanity is apt to upset the judgment of even the wisest of men, and her evident appreciation of himself was sufficient excuse for the apparent loss of the early morning hour.

His acquaintances noticed a great smartening up of the outer man, and even a frivolous tendency to hum, or whistle sentimental songs in these happy summer days, but though some may have guessed his secret, he confided in no one. It was too sacred to be discussed, even if he had had the courage to mention it.

This uninterrupted happiness was soon to have a disquieting element brought into it like all else on earth. Herr Lebrecht was in the habit of playing a game of whist after dinner in the restaurant he frequented, and one of his set, a young lawyer, named Edward Franke, happened to mention one evening that he had friends in the Garten Strasse, and let fall something about a very pretty girl. Lebrecht nearly revoked, and played shockingly for the rest of the evening. His heart was suddenly torn with pangs of jealousy, for there could not be two "very pretty" girls in that street, he felt sure, and as he looked at the good-looking, self-possessed, genial fellow before him, he realised that he would be a formidable rival for any man.

He made a desperate resolve. He must make sure of her while there was yet time, so he decided to declare himself by letter without delay. He made an excuse and asked for a postal directory before he went home that night; but there was no name given for the inhabitants of that particular house. Perhaps they were new-comers, any how she would understand. He *must* risk it!

For the next three days he spent all his spare time in the composition of that letter. He felt his dry, official style was against him, and yet he feared to give free rein to his passion lest it should jar on her delicate sensibilities. At last it was completed fairly to his satisfaction, and if the subject-matter left anything to be desired, certainly the caligraphy was a masterpiece. He copied it out three times before he was satisfied, and then took it with him the next morning.

After looking carefully round once or twice he drew the letter from his pocket and held it up for his beloved to see, and in so doing, his hand trembled so violently that he dropped it. Then he tried to hide it in the holly hedge that ran alongside the house, and after tearing his hands and dropping the note again, he managed to fix it where she could easily reach it.

All that day his mind was torn with suspense and excitement, and a sleepless night followed. The next morning was wet and stormy, and it was all the poor nervous young man could do to make his way towards the place where he felt his fate might be decided.

Just as he reached the house his umbrella was turned inside out, and a strong gust of wind carried his carefully brushed top hat out into the middle of the muddy street. He caught a fleeting glance at the window, and saw that his faithful love was there, undeterred by wind and weather, and then he started off on a wild and humiliating chase after his whirling head-gear.

The result of this catastrophe was a feverish cold which kept the registrar confined to the house for more than a week, and this unwonted period of inaction was devoted to fond dreams of the fair unknown. He attributed to her all the virtues he most admired in woman, and filled in the bare outline of his knowledge with all the delicate touches of his romantic fancy. The fact of her not having answered his letter by writing to the address he had given her, pointed to a sense of maidenly modesty that quite softened the weary time of waiting.

Digitized by Google

His ambition awoke, and he decided that he would make a career for himself, and he pictured her at his side as he climbed the ladder of official promotion, till they both graced its highest rung.

As soon as he was convalescent he took an afternoon walk, and his steps involuntarily turned towards the Garten Strasse. He had no hope of seeing the object of his affections, but it was something even to pass her house again.

An unpleasant shock awaited him. There was the lawyer, dressed in a brand-new grey summer suit and faultless patent leather shoes, making his way in the direction of the very house. And worse than that,—there was his goddess at the window smiling and blushing at Frank, just as she had done to him for the last month. His rival passed the house, but when he had reached the corner he turned, and, in doing so, ran into the excited registrar.

"Ah, good-afternoon, Herr Lebrecht. Glad to see you out again. We have missed you very much at the whist table."

The registrar could not find words to answer these platitudes, his heart was too full, but he turned and walked silently to the house, struggling with his emotion.

Finding him a dull companion, the lawyer drew out his watch, and, after looking at it, said carelessly:

"Well, we shall meet to-morrow, I daresay. I have an appointment that I must keep, so I'll bid you good day. You don't look like yourself yet, you must be quiet for a bit longer."

With this Lebrecht burst forth into an incoherent torrent of reproaches. At first his companion thought his mind must be wandering, and was seriously alarmed; but by degrees the truth began to dawn upon him from the repeated allusions to the girl at the balcony, and he burst into a hearty laugh.

"Oh, so you think I want to cut you out in that fair lady's affections, do you? My dear fellow, calm yourself. I should never dream of taking the trouble, she's not worth it. She has exactly the same smile for every passer-by. She's a——"

"Stop, Herr Franke! I forbid you to speak one disparaging word of her in my hearing. She has been sufficiently insulted already," said the registrar with dignity.

"Oh, she won't mind. Will you, my dear?" and Herr Franke began impudently kissing his hand at the lady in question.

The registrar expected to see his divinity withdraw from the window in disgust, but to his grief and astonishment she remained there and seemed to like it. He concealed his bitter disappointment under the veil of righteous indignation, and continued to remonstrate.

"Open your eyes, man, and see what a paltry thing you're exciting yourself about!" exclaimed Franke, who was fast losing patience.

"Herr Franke, you shall give me satisfaction for this! You are a ——" and before he well knew what he was saying, an opprobrious epithet had passed his lips.

"Very well, Herr Lebrecht," answered the other quietly, "I've not time to settle the matter now, but you shall hear from me."

With that they parted, and the registrar never knew how he reached his rooms that day. All his beautiful dreams had been ruthlessly obliterated. He had seen enough to convince him that she was *not* what he had fondly imagined, and now he was going to risk his life for an unworthy object. His short sight would be very much against him in a duel, and he knew that the lawyer was the hero of many such contests. Still, life had now lost for him all that made it beautiful, so he might as well die at once as linger on in sorrowful loneliness.

The next day was Sunday, and a special messenger brought him the following note:

Sir.—I have fought too many duels to be afraid of any accusation of cowardice being brought against me, but I consider it my duty to decline to fight with you. I attribute your exoited conduct to your recent indisposition, and feel sure you will see the wisdom of my decision when you have regained your normal health. For your satisfaction let me add that I know nothing against the character of the lady at the window in the Garten Strasse, and that she is not to be blamed for her seeming levity, inasmuch as she is unable to control either her smiles or her movements. The fault lies with the landlord, who has allowed the work of a crack-brained artist tenant to remain on the blind window.—I am yours faithfully, Edward Franke.

No one ever ever knew what Adolf Lebrecht suffered on the receipt of the above. He shut himself up in his room till dusk, and then crept forth with his opera glass in his pocket to satisfy himself as to the nature of the object upon which he had lavished such a wealth of love and thought. One look through the glass convinced him that Herr Franke had told him the truth, for he could see the bold, masterly strokes drawn on the brickwork after the scene-painting style. The object had evidently been to get rid of the unsightly space where a window had been blocked up, so the artist had been lavish with his colours and had painted the white lace curtains behind the figure of the smiling, rosy maiden, in front of whom were the gay flowers in the balcony which she was represented as in the act of watering.

It was all wonderfully natural; the registrar's mortification knew no bounds. He found his note still among the holly leaves, discoloured by the damp, but otherwise intact, and he crushed it savagely in his hand till he reached the bridge, when he tied it to a stone and hurled it far from him into the rapid stream below.

He felt completely shattered by this rude awakening from "Love's Young Dream," and he passed a hideous night, haunted by the smiling face of the girl rushing after him with a pistol, while the lawyer cheered her on, waving the laboriously constructed love-letter in his hand.

The next morning he bought a pair of spectacles and bade farewell to romance.

Happily for him Herr Franke soon left the city to take a practice elsewhere, so no one was at hand to remind him of his wasted affections. He resumed his mechanical mode of life, and as years went on his heart seemed to shrink and shrivel up like his face, and he strenuously avoided every woman under fifty to the end of his days.

Years after, he met Herr Franke, who had risen to eminence in his profession; but had been singularly unfortunate in his choice of a wife. He held out his hand to the lonely little man saying:

"Well, Herr Lebrecht, are you as enthusiastic as ever?"

The tide of memory awakened by these words caused a deep flush of pain to overspread the features of his former would-be antagonist which caused the speaker to add in a softened voice:

"Be comforted, my friend, it would have been well for some of us if our youthful dreams had ended as yours did."

And with a hearty shake of the hand Herr Franke walked away with a bitter smile on his handsome features.

Mary Fermor.

Digitized by Google

MARGHERITA.

MARGHERITA'S head was small and shapely, her hair fine and silky, like the hair that is supposed to be nourished only by blue blood.

But there was no blue blood in Margherita's veins. At least it had never been boasted of in her family. The blood that tinged to red the olive of her cheek was warm, rich blood. such blood as the honest Italian peasantry women delight to keep pure.

There was a touch of yellow in her hair that just saved it from being black as night, and gave to it little tints of gold when the sunlight fell on it here and there. This she owed to the Saxon blood of her mother; all the black was the father's.

How shapely her figure! And her hands—her hands were very small, Pedro had often noticed, in spite of much hard work in the gardens.

The gold in the hair Pedro had also long ago noted, and the fine set of the small head on the straight young neck.

There had come a change into Margherita's life, and she was telling him about it.

Had a stranger chanced along the road just then, past the little house with its great gardens that lay just outside the town, he would have cast more than a careless glance at the young couple who stood at the gate.

The girl wore a blue calico dress cut round at the neck, and with sleeves that fell loose to just below the elbow. Resting her elbows on the top piece of the gate and her chin in her palms, the sleeves fell away and left her slim, rounded arms bare almost to the shoulder.

The young man stood outside the closed gate and gazed earnestly down into the girl's laughing face.

"He is handsome as the girl is," the passing stranger would have commented. "Just as dark, and unmistakably a child of the same sunny clime."

Pedro's gardens were but a bit of a way from those of Margherita's father. His lettuce was always the crispest and greenest, and his celery was famed the country round. Margherita often helped him tie it into bunches, and the celery went away to market with a merry girl's bright laughter to season it. Pedro's cart never came back with a burden.

"You will go then?"

And the young man's gaze travelled across the wide slope of Margherita's father's garden until it rested on the turret-like end of a big house that just peeped over the brow of the hill and between the tall trees.

"You will go up there and serve rather than—— But pshaw! What am I saying?"

Margherita looked up eagerly now into his face, as if half expecting, half hoping that she would hear him say the something she felt sure he would say some day. But it was not said. In after years. when Pedro sat alone until far into the night, he wished that it had been.

The girl's expectant look changed quickly to one of wilfulness.

"And why not? Why should I not as well serve there as here?"

"Up there are fine ladies and—and fine men. You are pretty. You will lay by your calico dress and put on fine clothes. You'll forget about the gardens, and how to bunch celery and lettuce, and——"

His dark cheeks were burning now, and he had stretched his arm out over the gate. To a girl not used to the soft and musical accents his words would have meant much, but Margherita had known him always. Why, yes, since she was a tiny child, and he not much larger, when he used to break the orange flowers from the trees and shower them over her head in the garden of their poor but sunny home across the seas.

Some day—yes, maybe, some day, when Pedro had paid off all the debt on his gardens, he would ask her to be his wife. But gold was not as fast coming in England as once, when far away, they had thought. But why must she work in her father's gardens and wait—always wait? The only glimpse she had of the big, gay town was on market days, and now—now as a fine lady's maid she would perhaps see the town every day, and hear the music at the balls, and, oh——

But the thought of it all made her head dizzy.

Pretty? Yes, Pedro had said so. And the fine men!

Here the spirit of the coquetry seized her. But Pedro was to blame. She would never have thought of the fine men had he not said something about them. What was it he had said about the fine men up at the big house and herself? But Margherita could not remember.

* * * * *

There were only occasional glimpses to be had of Margherita now when Pedro drove his cart of fresh green things to the backdoor of the big house each morning. Margherita's young mistress had long been one of Pedro's patrons, and Margherita would take care now to see that no other carts were so liberally patronised as his.

Digitized by Google

The short blue calico frock and the gay handkerchief that she used to wear over her head were gone. Instead, the trim and rounded figure was clad in a dark blue cloth gown, with white lace frills at neck and sleeves. The dark hair was tossed up in a fluffy mass at the back of the little head, and a tiny cap of lace and ribbons topped it all. In place of the stout leather shoes, slim black satin slippers, with saucy bows that called attention to them, were on her feet.

The first day that Pedro saw her like this she had run down the steps all out of breath, and flushed like a child to show herself to him. She had overturned a work basket from the little table from the window where she was sitting putting buttons on a long pair of gloves, when she spied Pedro's cart coming over the hill. The mistress had seen the flight of the little maid, and guessing the meaning of it, stooped smilingly, and picked up the scattered buttons.

Pedro looked at the girl and sighed.

"Why do you look so, you stupid? Don't you want to see me in pretty clothes? Well, maybe there are others who would like to."

And Margherita caught hold of her skirt at each side and spread it, displaying as she did her shapely ankles and small feet, and a white fluff of lace.

Pedro sighed again and mounted his waggon seat. Margherita's eyes filled with tears.

"Pedro! Pedro!" she called after him. "You are mean—I hate you!" But Pedro was driving away.

* * * * *

The summer days were fast passing. The gardens had grown and flourished, and there was another small sum to add to the debt, which now was "almost done," Pedro happily thought.

Margherita could find less time for a chat at the waggon in the morning. There was time enough in the evening, but she said she was busy getting ready to go away, to travel with her mistress abroad. "Back to Italy, Pedro; think of that," she had exclaimed the day that she had told him that her going was certain. Slowly the days were passing for Pedro, but, oh, how fast they went for Margherita! Margherita was light-hearted, but Pedro's heart was aching. There was gossip going afloat, and Margherita's was the one whose name gossip whispered.

"No good will come of it," said busy Gossip. "No good will come of it. It means no good when a girl meets a man to take walks only after the sun is down, and he one who is a fine gentleman. Margherita should know better. And then she goes no more to confession. Poor Pedro! If he knew!"

And Pedro did know, though he said over and over to himself that they were busybodies who said that Margherita was seen walking alone in the moonlight with a handsome stranger. It was one moonlight evening that Pedro, just strolling by the great house to maybe catch a glance of Margherita as she would chance to flit by some window, saw two figures going along a secluded path of the wide lawn. One was Margherita, the other that of a man tall and young. Pedro's heart grew sick. But he had just come up to see Margherita pass a window. He would not do so mean a thing as spy. He knew that Margherita had always loved him. He could trust Margherita. She was so good and honest. But it was Margherita walking there.

* * * * *

One day there came a letter. It was written on delicate paper and bore a crest. Margherita's father walked across the now almost bare gardens to where Pedro lived. He put the letter in Pedro's hands and said not a word as he turned away.

It was from Margherita's mistress, saying Margherita had left her before the steamship sailed from Liverpool, leaving a note behind, saying that she would be happier where she was going and begging that no one would look for her, and that she would be safe. "But please send word to the folks at home," Margherita had asked, "that I will not be back for a long time."

There was a cheque inclosed, Margherita's last wages, which she had not asked or waited for.

How the winter came and wore away, and spring once more with its warm sunshine coaxed the seed in the garden to send up fresh green shoots, Pedro could never remember. But all the warm season had been good, that was certain, for the last of the debt was paid.

Next summer there would be a stall in the market for Pedro to tend, and a man to look after the gardens and the waggon. If Margherita had only waited a little longer! But it was winter now, and a long time until the stall in the market would need attention, and there was plenty of time to think in the long evenings of Margherita, from whom no news had come.

"It will never come," Pedro said to himself, but he cheered the old father with the assurance that Margherita was a good girl, and that in time she would send them some word. That she would never do but what was right, never fear.

* * * * *

Springtime again, and a letter for Pedro. The postman who rode out that way on horseback brought it just as it was time to light the lamp and put more wood on the fire to get supper. The postman was late in his rounds that day, the roads were so muddy. The letter should have been there hours ago but for that.

Pedro almost snatched the letter from the man. Why did he stand there and talk? Didn't he know that perhaps it was a message he had been waiting through long, weary months for, and now delayed it?

It was just a scrap of writing. It only said "Pedro, come," and gave an address.

The roads were muddy, and it was a long way to the station, but what of that? There was a good horse in the stable, and if one travelled fast the train that left in an hour could be caught, and by midnight Pedro would be beside Margherita.

It was just midnight when a quiet-faced little sister met him at the hospital door. Pedro looked at her intently. The good woman, so used to reading anxious looks, said gently: "She still lives."

Then it was as he feared. Maybe Margherita would die! All Pedro's impetuous haste left him, and he followed the little sister softly on tip-toe, as though he were going where there was a sleeping child.

On a little iron bed in the tiny, spotless room, with another sister bending over her, lay the girl—pale and thin. Her dark hair was cut close and clung in little rings above her forehead.

"Yes, you may speak to her. It can do no harm. She may not know you now," the sister whispered.

The strong figure of the man bent over the little cot, and "Margherita" was all he said. The girl opened her eyes.

"Pedro," she answered; "yes, it is Pedro. We were married, Pedro. You did not think we were not, did you? I am sorry, Pedro. So sorry. Poor Pedro!"

The sisters drew him away. There was a sigh, and a little flutter of the slender hands on the white coverlet, and the sister at the foot of the bed made the sign of

Digitized by Google

the cross, and said: "It is all over." But Pedro, bending down, saw that faint breaths stirred the ruffles of her nightgown, and all that night he sat by her side. The sisters came and went, and in the morning the doctor came and said that Margherita was better—that she had slept.

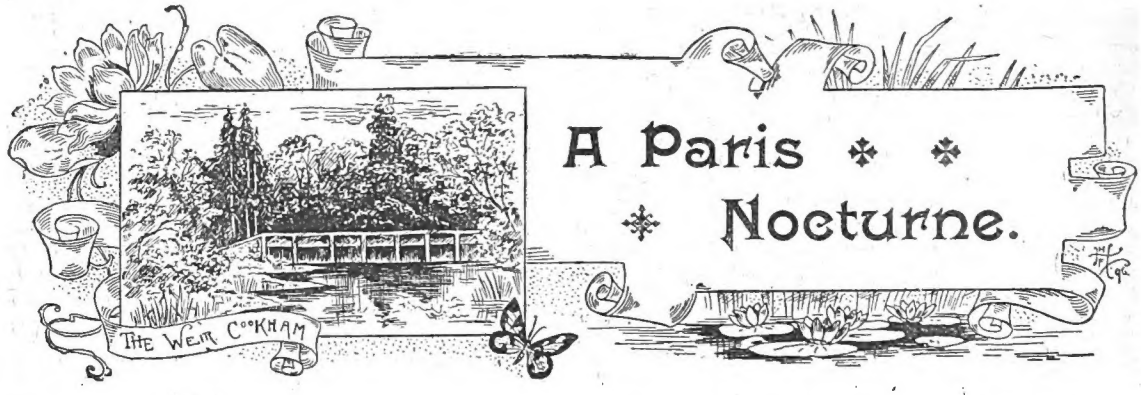
When Pedro went away. Margherita woke up and told the sisters the dream she had had. Some weeks after that she told it to Pedro, and he said she had not dreamt.

Then Margherita told the story of the years that had not for either of them known happiness—of how she was tired of as a toy, of unkind treatment, of desertion, and the coming of kind death to set her free—free to go back to Pedro's love and ask his forgiveness.

The lettuce and onion were sprouting high above the ground, and there were wide stretches of green on every side when Margherita came back home. She had not forgotten how to bunch lettuce, or celery either, and as she worked the old colour and life came back into her face.

The stranger who might have passed that way when she stood at the gate long ago and told Pedro that she was going up to the great house on the other side of the wood would have noticed little change in her. The blue calico dress and gay handkerchief looked just as bright as ever, and Pedro thought there was no change in the girlish face except it might be a trifle less of laughter in the eyes. In time the new neighbours coming in had many good words of praise for Pedro's thrifty wife. "He was a lucky man, very, to have a wife to turn her hand so well to helping him."

HELEN NOANES.



A Paris Nocturne.

"THE price will do."

"Monsieur is most kind."

"And—ah!—let me see. This is the fifth floor, I believe?"

"No, monsieur," simpered the landlady, slightly drooping her eyes.

"But you told me," began the gentleman with the Bohemian air, Greek nose, and shaggy, blond curls, "you told me, madame——"

"Yes, monsieur," Mme. Toudouch half stammered; "I—I had forgotten. On the fifth floor there is a room occupied, and monsieur wished this floor—the fourth—to be quite vacant."

"Yes," was the lingering reply. With a remarkably white hand, though large and muscular, the gentleman stroked a clear-chiseled chin. Suddenly, with this same hand, he made a sweeping gesture: "I will take all the little suite; but, mind you, I expect quiet during the week that I am here. I shall rest and drowse most of the time. I shall have no visitors—absolutely none. Frankly, I shall be in retirement. An absorbing affair—a matter of business, most wearisome business—will soon engross me, and hence I am taking this preparatory term of repose. You are sure I shall not be disturbed, madame—absolutely sure?"

"Oh, yes, monsieur, absolutely."

"My name is—er—Doruc—Albert Doruc."

"Thank you, monsieur."

"Please let my luggage be sent up. You have, no doubt, perceived that it is very small. I shall ask you for a cup of coffee each morning—good, strong coffee—a roll and a bit of butter. Please see that all three are excellent. Stay, madame."

And here M. Duroc glanced about him at the shabby, but clean apartment. "Perhaps you would prefer that I should give you half the agreed sum in advance." He then drew out a purse, and as he did so, the old woman's withered face became one broad smile of pleasure.

After she had gone, Duroc leant from one of his dormer windows, and looked at Paris below the slumbering azure of a perfect autumn afternoon. Yonder was Ile St. Louis, with Notre Dame so near that one could almost make out the grimaces of its ghoulish gargoyles. Ah, dear old Notre Dame, with the adorable sculptures of its main doorway, saints and martyrs all tangled together like roses in a huge wreath! Dear old "other side of the river!" What thrilling memories it evoked! There wound the Seine, with its little toylike steamboats, bound for Charenton, for Suresnes, for numberless ports besides. And the stately fawn-coloured buildings on either bank, skirting so palatially each curvilinear verge. Ah, the delicious days of boyhood, and to be here once again where he had dwelt for so many youthful years! How refreshing after the loud, bustling life of that other Paris, whose boulevards and cafés, and theatres, and salons teemed with a thousand ambitions, rivalries, hates!

"I will dine over here near the Luxembourg," meditated Duroc, "in a little restaurant, which has long ago forgotten my existence. Then I will come back to my

Digitized by Google

placid refuge and enjoy the first serene sleep of seven, all of which I hope will be equally happy. How nice to be hidden away like this! After Monday next my work must begin. Meanwhile rest, rest, rest, before the tremendous task that awaits me."

Later Duroc carried out his intention. He took a stroll through obscure, yet familiar streets for nearly an hour after dining, and then returned to his new lodgings. He was a light sleeper, yet a healthful one. Hardly five minutes after blowing out his candle he had fallen into just the pleasant slumber that he craved.

"La—la—la—la—lah—la—la—la—tira, lira, lira—lah—la—tira lirah, lira—r r r!"

Then the tinkle, tinkle, tinkle, and thrum, thrum, thrum of a piano; then the woman's voice and also the piano, both dawning together into awakened consciousness; then a man's basso voice, repeating every tira-lira, every lah of the feminine one.

By this time Duroc was thoroughly awake. He soon lighted a candle and looked at his watch—ten minutes past midnight. The vocal exercises continued. Sleep was now impossible. He anathematised his landlady. Why had she dared to lie like this? Had she not promised him peace? The detestable sounds came too plainly from a room just above him. At a quarter past one o'clock they ceased. Soon afterwards he heard a man's step descend the staircase, passing his door.

The chain of sleep having thus been rudely broken, it was three good hours before he rejoined its disrupted links. He awoke at about nine in the morning, full of indignant protest. Finding the landlady downstairs, he poured upon her a torrent of reproaches. Was it for this that she had accepted his advance payment? Had she not assured him that his lodgings should be quiet? Of course, all the while, she knew of these two owls upstairs, these midnight cats, with their bass and treble miaulings! And the piano, too, a ramshackle thing at best! Was this honest dealing? Was it not shameless deceit?

But the landlady could now afford to be a trifle haughty. Was she not in sweet possession of the deposit?

"Monsieur is unjust! I supposed that he would be fast asleep when they began. The young man never comes till midnight."

Duroc gave a groan and swept past his landlady. He hated all chichancery, and he resolved forthwith to quit the lodgings. Then his wound rankled. Those few extra francs were nothing; but the cool imposition of it all!

He would remain for one day more and a night at least. If the tira-liras again awoke him, as of course they could not fail to do, he would make an emphatic request that these disturbers of his slumbers should keep silent. This would be wreaking a kind of vengeance on his landlady, for neither would she relish having her duplicity publicly disclosed, nor would the fair repute of her dwelling be thereby enhanced.

"Perhaps, after all, though," mused Duroc, "I shall sleep through the clamour of to-night. If not, farewell for ever to Mme. Toudouche."

At ten that evening Duroc ascended his staircase with the intention of retiring. Scarcely had he closed his door when madame's somewhat plaintive voice caused him to reopen it.

"I am so sorry it has happened, monsieur. Of course I realise that monsieur is perfectly right. I have not an idea who she is. Apparently, however, she is very poor. That touched my heart." And Mme. Toudouche made the motion of wiping away a tear. "She says the gentleman is her brother. She pays very little for the room. The piano is her own. She had it brought up herself. And now, M. Duroc, I have come to assure you that you need only command, and I will obey."

"Command? Obey, Mme. Toudouche?"

"Yes, monsieur. It is not right that you should be kept awake like this. I will tell the young girl when she comes to-night that I shall ask no further pay of her, and that she must at once cease from these disturbing practices."

"What a poor little handful of sous that 'pay' must be," thought Duroc, with irrepressible cynicism.

Somehow, after the landlady had departed, and while flinging himself into the only easy chair that his room contained, a twinge of consciousness assailed him. Might he not, after all, be thwarting some effort of self-support on the part of this girl—just referred to as possibly very poor? There might be cogent reasons why she should hold these weird concerts with her brother. "Well, no matter what happens to-night," he meditated, "I will endure it. And to-morrow, if I have been annoyed as I was last night, I can make a change of quarters. Meanwhile the most merciful plan is to see Mme. Toudouche at once and tell her that she must restrain her veto; that it is my earnest wish."

But soon, as it happened, a drowsiness overtook him, and he fell asleep there in the armchair. He was a man in perfect health, but for many days past he had been constitutionally tired by a special pressure of work.

Awakening abruptly after what he felt to have been a long and wholly unforeseen nap, he heard the piano banging upstairs, and the tira-liras blended with its notes.

Rubbing his eyes he laughed aloud. "It's hard to be charitable," he muttered. "How strange I should have fallen asleep like this. I suppose it's my broken rest of last night."

He rose with the immediate intention of undressing. All at once the sounds ceased. Then came another noise—that of voices. He opened his door and went out into the hall.

Upstairs Mme. Toudouche was vehemently talking. "I meant to wait up for you and tell you, mademoiselle, but I was too fatigued, and I lost myself in a long doze. Now I must insist that you stop your singing and playing at this unseemly hour—you and the young man whom you call your brother."

"He is my brother, Mme. Toudouche, just as I have said."

"Yes, madam, she is my sister."

"Well, I can't help that. The gentleman downstairs will not stand it, and he is perfectly right. I——"

Duroc listened no longer. He quickly mounted the steps leading to the upper hall. There he saw in the dim light three figures.

"Ah! M. Duroc," exclaimed the landlady, "it's you? Of course you have been distressed again by this wretched business. And slight wonder."

The light from the near room struck full on a pale, girlish face as "mademoiselle" advanced several steps.

"Oh, M. Duroc, may I beg you to let us go on? This young man is my brother, though madame here has hinted otherwise. I cannot play and sing at home. I had the piano brought here. It's the only possession of the least value that we now have left. My brother plays in the orchestra at one of the small Montmartre theatres. He would have time to teach me in the day,

Digitized by Google

but I have no time then. I am always at the bedside of my poor, sick mother. She takes her sleeping potion at half-past eleven every night, and till half-past one it keeps her quiet. In a week from now my sister, who is a shop-girl at the Bon Marché, will lose her position. They are discharging hands there, now that the dull season has begun. But I have been positively promised a place in the chorus of the new opera at the Comique, provided I can only learn how to use my voice a little better than I use it now. My sister, you see, monsieur, will then become my mother's nurse, and the money that she can no longer earn I shall earn instead. At least, this is my hope, for it seems too hard that the whole burden of our family maintenance should fall upon poor Achille here. Look at him, monsieur; Achille is not strong. See how pale and thin he is, and he is only just nineteen. But he has marked musical talent, and he is helping me a very great deal. Oh, pray do not have us turned away! It has cost so much for us to get our piano up here and pay the rent of the room—so much, I mean, for us in our forlorn poverty!"

The girl's lips quivered with entreaty as she paused. Her eyes, large and black, were quite tearless, but they burnt with a keen, dry shine.

"And what is this new opera," asked Duroc gently, "in the chorus of which you hope to obtain a position?"

"Does not monsieur know?" here politely asked Achille, whose slender frame was as dim to Duroc as the latter's taller and burlier one was dim to him. "It is *Fiordelisa*, by the celebrated composer M. Albert Charantelle. He is the writer of five or six other works, all of which have been great successes here in Paris. It is said that *Fiordelisa*, will eclipse them all. M. Albert Charantelle is a strange gentleman in certain ways, though greatly beloved, I am told, by a wide circle of friends. For instance, when he has thoroughly completed an opera, and everything is ready for the first rehearsal, he has an odd way of disappearing from the world for a week or more, and nobody can find his whereabouts. They say that he has now disappeared like this. It is to gain rest, complete rest, or so I have been informed, before the great labour shall begin of putting the opera on the stage. But punctually on the morning of rehearsal he will appear at the Opera Comique and take up his baton and drill the singers and the choruses untiringly for days, until everybody is perfect in every part."

"Ah, indeed," said Duroc, rather deep down in his throat.

Without another word he moved past the threshold of the small, bare little room, and seated himself before the little upright old-fashioned piano. For a moment his fingers wandered dreamily over its keys, and then, with almost magic amplitude and finish, a gush of the most beautiful melody burst upon the stillness. As it continued it seemed to blossom even more than to sound. You might have fancied it was some garland woven from flowers of music by the hands of invisible spirits. The poor little ill-tuned piano seemed to its listeners an instrument of diapason divine.

Entranced, intoxicated, the young girl felt her brother's hand clutch her own.

"It is he, Gilberte," gasped Achille. "It is M. Albert Charantelle himself. I once heard him play at a concert, and some one near me said: 'If he had not chosen to be a great composer he would have been the greatest of pianists.'"

"Good Heavens!" faltered the young girl, and Mme. Toudouche, enveloped in an extremely unbecoming wrapper, heard a little cry of consternation.

Here the music slowly ceased in a ripple of tinkling arpeggios. With his hands dropping away from the keys, M. Albert Charantelle turned towards the young girl.

"My dear mademoiselle, you must accept from me a louis to-night for the sake of your poor mother."

"Oh, monsieur!" cried Gilberte, bursting into tears.

"And at ten o'clock precisely, next Monday morning, present yourself with this card at the stage entrance of the Opera Comique. Then you shall see what you shall see. From your tira-liras I feel already quite convinced that you will do excellently well in at least one or two of the choruses of *Fiordelisa*."

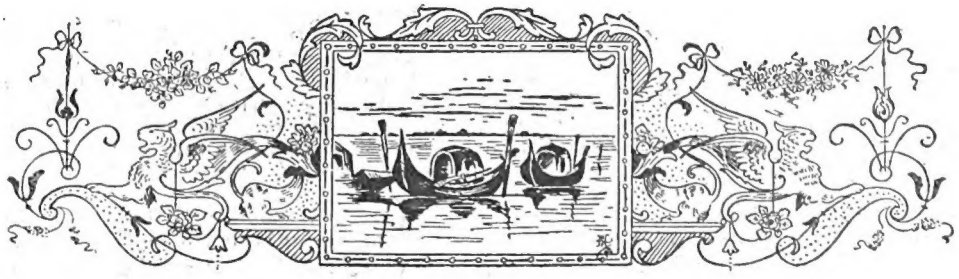
Gilbert passionately kissed the card.

"Oh, Achille, you are quite right! It is he—it is the great M. Charantelle himself! Ah! what a wonderful stroke of good luck!"

"And, now," said the gentleman, running one hand through his short, glossy curls, while he fixed the gaze of his brilliant, tawny brown eyes first on Achille and then on his sister, "I have to beg a favour of you both. Please give me a few quiet nights from now until Monday next. Will you not kindly grant me this favour?"

Achille broke into a laugh at what struck him as the delicate satire of these words: but Gilberte wiped her eyes, from which the grateful tears had not yet ceased to flow.

Francois Collett.



Digitized by Google

THE CLIENTS OF THE FORTUNE TELLER

(Told by Han Chu, on board the flower boat "Heavenly Bliss," Canton River.)

IT was a lovely afternoon in the middle of summer. The day was too hot to sit in the house, and the young ladies had taken their work and gone down to the Pavilion which stood upon an island in the stream that ran through the willow garden.

Their names were Hyacinth and Honeysuckle; and each had been so largely endowed by the Mother of All Things, that it would have taxed the wisdom of Confucius to decide between them.

Happy as the birds which built in the branches, the demon of jealousy had never entered their innocent young breasts.

Cousins by nature, they were companions by choice; and, being near neighbours, some hours of every day were spent together — working in the house, chatting in the garden, or feeding the tame carp in the fish pond. Hyacinth hadn't a thought which she did not share with Honeysuckle; and Honeysuckle confided to Hyacinth every maiden meditation which visited her youthful soul.

The cousins rose and walked out on the balcony.

The young ladies were the only daughters of blue-button mandarins.

Their fathers held official appointments in the province of the Four Streams—the most delightful region in the Imperial dominions—and resided in the suburbs of the important city of Mienchu on the Fu River—a tributary of the mighty Yang-tse—which, as everybody knows, rises in the Valley of Heaven, and flows thence through the Flowery Land.

The abode of Hyacinth was named Felicity House, while the dwelling of Honeysuckle was known as Paradise Place.

To describe them is a task beyond the power of mere mortal men. Suffice it to say that each was such as the Sons of the Stars might have envied, or the greatest of the Five Hundred Genii have chosen for his earthly tabernacle.

Digitized by Google

The cousins were delightful girls—tall and finely shaped, with complexions of ivory, and willow-like waists. Their eyebrows—arched like the rainbow—shaded eyes which dazzled by their brightness and intoxicated by their beauty.

Their mouths were perfect rosebuds, while their daintily shod feet were certainly the most provoking little things in China—being exactly of the length prescribed for the Court beauties in the palace of the Emperor at Pekin, which, you know, is just three inches long.

But to add to the attractions of these peerless paragons, Hyacinth and Honeysuckle, and, further, to enhance the value of their great physical perfections, the girls possessed all the virtues commended in the Mother of Mencius, and were in the first bloom of heavenly youth. By a singular coincidence, which, however, may account for their twin-like endowments, they were born at the same hour of the same day in the same month of the same year—being the hour of the Dragon on the fourth day of the eighth month in the fifth year of the reign of Heenfung.

The maids carried them to the fortune-teller.

Consequently, on the day when they sat together in the Flower Pavilion, embroidering slippers for the paternal feet, the girls would be fourteen years old.

"Shall we go on to the balcony and watch the gold-fish in the water?" said Hyacinth, throwing down her work. "I'm quite weary of this eternal stitching."

"Really, now, I feel just that way myself, dear," answered Honeysuckle sympathetically, "and the Shantung pattern's very trying to the eyes."

The apartment in which the young ladies were at work opened on to a balcony that was filled with flowers. Azaleas and poinsiettias, lilies and China-asters, roses and honeysuckles, hyacinths and hydrangeas—in tubs, in pots, in vases—there were flowers everywhere, flowers of every shape and every hue.

The cousins rose and walked out on the balcony Dressed in silken robe and pleated petticoat of purple satin, with enamelled hairpins thrust through their shining tresses, bangles on their shapely wrists, and the smallest of embroidered shoes upon their tiny dots of feet, the dainty damsels themselves were surely the prettiest flowers there.

Leaning over the rail, each willowy waist encircled by an arm, they stood and watched the gleam of the glittering scales, as the gold and silver fish darted to and fro under the crooked bridge which connected the island with the other parts of the garden.

"Jasmine tells me there's a famous conjurer and fortune-teller in the town," said Hyacinth presently, throwing a few rose petals into the water.

Jasmine was the maid who waited upon Miss Hyacinth.

"Yes, so Autumn-Leaf was saying, as she brushed out my hair for me last night," replied Honeysuckle, toying with a lily-spray that was caressing her cheek.

"Such a chance might not occur again, dear, in a lifetime," murmured Hyacinth.

"In the Book of Wise Sayings it is written that the man who casteth away his opportunities shall himself be cast away," put in Honeysuckle.

"And in the Book of Fate who shall read but he who is learned in the Wisdom of the Fathers?" observed Hyacinth.

"Even this fortune-teller," suggested Honeysuckle.

"I believe he has been sent expressly for the purpose,"

Digitized by Google

asserted Hyacinth. "I am fourteen years old, and I never heard of a fortune-teller being seen in the town before."

"Nor I, dear," affirmed Honeysuckle. "It would be a mighty poor compliment to the Giver of Good Things to neglect to profit by the visit of his servant."

"He was at Pekin only a week ago, where, Jasmine understands, he told the fortunes of all the ladies of the Imperial harem."

"And cast the horoscope of the Emperor's favourite daughter."

"And was received in private audience at the Summer Palace. Jasmine, who was shopping in Idol Street yesterday, says the news was all over the city——"

"And was decorated with the order of the——"

"Dragon and the Sun. Yes, I know, dear. Jasmine always brings me the latest."

"Autumn-Leaf, my dear Hyacinth, always gives me the earliest and fullest intelligence of what is going on in the town. The man was transported from Pekin on a flying carpet."

"In three hours. And his name——"

"His common, vulgar name is Li Ming; but his professional appellation is Star of the Morning, and his fee for unmarried girls of good family is ten ounces of pure silver."

"Your information agrees with mine, dear, exactly," said Hyacinth amiably, "and seeing that we have now reached an age when the marriage brokers will soon be busy arranging for our bethrothal, would not this be a fine opportunity to learn the sort of husbands we are likely to get; and how soon we shall ride in the festive chair, and be lifted over the fire which is lit at every 'newly-married' threshold?"

"The very thing, pet, that I was going to ask you," rejoined Honeysuckle, with a ripple of laughter as sweet as the bells in the Temple of Heaven at Pekin. "I'm afraid, dear, it was more about Star of the Morning that I was thinking than about my father's slippers, while I was trying to follow the intricacies of the Shantung pattern."

"Of course, dear, we cannot ask him to come to us; nor, without running a fearful risk, can we venture to visit him. Happily, however, this is not necessary. Jasmine, who has lived in the best families, tells me that ladies of quality never think of a personal consultation with the fortune-teller. The ladies of the Imperial harem, for instance, would only send him the eight characters, together with the colour of their hair and eyes, and the length of the ring finger. In the case of a fortune-teller so world-famous as Star of the Morning, that would be quite sufficient."

"Wonderful!" exclaimed Honeysuckle. "Just what Autumn-Leaf——"

"You won't find his equal out of China, according to Jasmine; and what I propose, my dear, is, for each to write down the eight characters representing the year, month, day and hour of birth, with the etceteras, and get our maids to carry them to the fortune-teller and bring back his reply. There's paper—red paper will be best—red for luck, you know. Besides, sweet, it will convey to Mr. Ming a delicate hint——"

"That we are anxious to have our feet tied with the red silk with which Heaven binds the feet of those whose marriages have been arranged for them in the courts above."

"Exactly. They always expect one to show which way the hare runs. If a girl wants to hear about a husband, it's aggravating to have longevity and everything else put in, while the man she wants to hear about is left out."

"What a dear, good, thoughtful girl you are," said Honeysuckle.

"There's paper then, and pencil; ink-slab and ink in the Pavilion," said Hyacinth, "so let's set about it at once, shall we, dear?"

The cousins filled up the slips and the maids carried

Rushing out of the Pavilion.

them to the fortune-teller; and when the two girls met at the Pavilion in the willow garden next day, each had her answer ready to show to the other.

"My husband," said Honeysuckle, seating herself in a low bamboo chair, "is to be tall and rich and handsome. He will have a dark, almond eye, and a true Tartar nose—a man who can count the graves of his ancestors. His father is one of the men most respected in the province; and the son, who has passed all his exams with honours, will probably succeed him in office. 'The name of your beloved, that is to be,' wrote Star of the Morning, 'it would not be proper for you to know until the broker has spoken to your father; but his pigtail makes him the admiration of every woman who beholds him, while his dress of imperial blue and olive green proclaims him a man of taste and station. He will marry before he is twenty. May Heaven give happiness!'"

"Do you know, my dear Honeysuckle," said Hyacinth coldly, "that you have been describing my husband?"

"That is impossible——" began Honeysuckle.

"Nothing of the kind, miss," interrupted Hyacinth. "I tell you it is *my* husband that——"

"I beg your pardon——"

"You need it."

"I shall not stay here to be insulted," exclaimed Honeysuckle rising.

"Don't let me detain you, pray," returned Hyacinth sarcastically.

"I declare I will never set foot inside your doors again," cried Honeysuckle, rushing out of the Pavilion and over the crooked bridge which spanned the "trout stream."

Digitized by Google

"I'll send for you when I want you," bawled Hyacinth after the flying figure of her cousin.

Honeysuckle waited till she was hidden by the willows on the other side of the stream; then bursting into tears: "It really is too bad of Hyacinth," she sobbed, "and I'll never speak to her again. She is a jealous—horrid little thing; jealous because Star of the Morning has given me the Prefect's son, Li Chang, for my husband, and she'd like him herself. Autumn-Leaf knew who was pointed at directly she heard his description. I thought Hyacinth a better bred girl than to show such a nasty temper."

Meanwhile, Hyacinth, after firing her last shot at Honeysuckle, had thrown herself on a pile of cushions, and wept sorely. "The rude, impertinent minx," she stammered, after the first paroxysm had subsided, "to persist in claiming him for hers after I told her he was mine. Such behaviour is perfectly shameless. She's jealous, the little fool, because I wouldn't give in to her. If she hadn't been so downright ill-mannered as to contradict me to my face, I would have told her his name. Jasmine recognised him at once. 'It's Te Fung, Colonel Wen's son,' says she. Wonderfully clever fellow that fortune-teller. But I never should have supposed that Honeysuckle had such a beastly temper."

* * * * *

Mr. Ming, otherwise Star of the Morning, having filled his pockets at Mienchu, packed up his traps and departed, and in the fulness of time the ladies Hyacinth and Honeysuckle found that the marriage broker had been to their respective fathers, seeking to tie their pretty feet with the red silk of matrimony.

Greatly to their surprise, however, the husbands who presented themselves, were neither Li Chang nor Te Fung; yet by some mystery inexplicable to the brides, they were as proper a pair of phœnixes as the gentlemen whom they expected.

How Star of the Morning had contrived it, was as great a puzzle to them as how the Court Juggler taught the Emperor's mule to speak; but each got a husband just suited to her mind, though neither got the man they had quarrelled about; and, at the feast which followed the ceremony, jealousy was swallowed up in congratulations; while both agreed that the fortune-teller was certainly full as clever as they thought him.

Perhaps Star of the Morning may have guessed that in China there was possibly more than one tall, rich, handsome man who wore a long pigtail.

H. Hunter.

A Marvellous Magazine.

6D. *The January Pearson's.* 6D.

ARTISTS AND THEIR WORK. (Illustrated.) In this popular feature, which will be continued month by month in *Pearson's Magazine*, are reproduced some of the best pictures of the most prominent painters in all parts of the world. They will be accompanied by a series of notes on subjects of special interest in art, and on artistic curiosities.

A VISION OF THE FLOOD. This magnificent poem by Mr. George Griffith is illustrated with a series of splendid oil paintings by Mr. Abbey Altson, R.B.A.

THE EYE OF A GOD. (Illustrated by D. Murray Smith.) By W. A. Fraser. This story tells of the theft of a ruby from the eye of a Burmese God and of the surprises and disappointments in store for the distracted officials in their efforts to recover it.

HOW RAILWAY MEN FIGHT SNOW. (Illustrated with Photographs.) By Merriden Howard. Some remarkably interesting particulars are given of the methods employed by the big Railway Companies in removing snow from the permanent way. The article is illustrated with a number of striking photographs, showing engines charging the snowdrifts, a steam rotary plough forcing its way through the snow, and other remarkable sights.

THE ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN KETTLE. No. VII.—The Pearl Poachers. (Illustrated by Stanley L. Wood.) By Cutcliffe Hyne. Kettle is the hero of the day, and his adventures, which Mr. Cutcliffe Hyne relates in this story, are as exciting as anyone could wish.

THE CROWNS OF THE WORLD. (Illustrated with Photographs.) By A. O. Tibbits. Delightful reproductions are here given of the crowns belonging to the rulers of the chief kingdoms of the world. They are wonderful examples of beauty and magnificence.

POST OFFICE NEW YEAR CARDS. (Illustrated with examples.) By Geo. Day. The Post Offices throughout the world celebrate the New Year in a most delightful way by the mutual interchange of New Year cards. A number of the most interesting examples are reproduced.

REAL GHOST STORIES. No. I.—The Story of the Spaniards, Hammersmith. (Illustrated by B. E. Minns.) By E. and H. Heron.

LIFE'S LITTLE WORRIES. (Illustrated by A. Popini.) By W. L. Alden. Mr. Alden contributes some very amusing comments upon the little troubles which are continually besetting the poor mortal in the ordinary routine of life.

A DEALER IN BRAINS. (Illustrated with Photographs.) By R. C. Burt. Major Pond is the man who has gained for himself this title. He is the great lecture agent in America. Many well known Englishmen have lectured in the States under his auspices, and as may be imagined he has a whole fund of interesting reminiscences which he has placed at the disposal of the author of this article.

DREAR WINTER. (Illustrated by Hann.) By Philip Hemery.

THE COMMANDANT'S WIFE. (Illustrated by A. Kemp Tebby.) By Mrs. Orpen. A complete story.

LONDON'S COURT OF KING SOLOMON (Illustrated by S. Nation.) By J. Malcolm Fraser. Few people are aware that in London at the present moment there exists a Court of Justice, conducted upon almost the same lines as was the Court of King Solomon in the olden days.

SONG. By Cranstoun Metcalfe.

CHINESE STREET CALLS. (Illustrated with Photographs.) By Alfred Edmonds. One phase of Chinese life is admirably described in this article. It appears that every vendor of goods in China has a special "instrument of musical torture," upon which he heralds his approach. We have been fortunate to obtain a complete collection of all the instruments thus used, and we are able to publish the first series of photographs of them that have ever appeared in this country.

THE MYSTERY OF THE PORTHAMPTON EXPRESS. (Illustrated by H. Piffard.) By Victor L. Whitechurch. In this remarkable story the mystery of the disappearance of Balmaceda, the famous President of Chili, is explained in a most striking way.

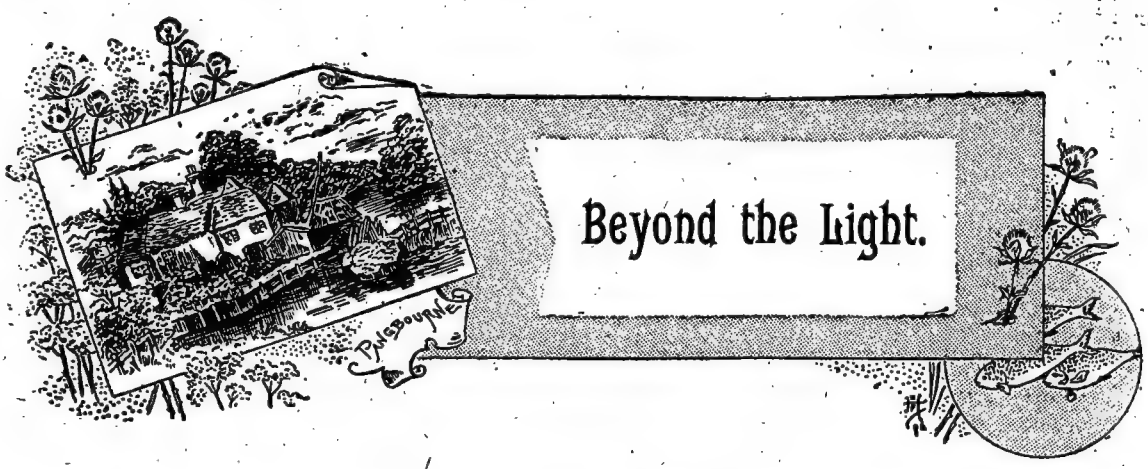
THE BRAVEST REGIMENT. (Illustrated with Photographs.) By George A. Wade. The author of this article has set himself to answer the question: "Which regiment of the British Army has most distinguished itself on the field of battle?" He draws some very interesting conclusions from the facts at his disposal.

A TUNNEL OF MUSHROOMS. (Illustrated with Photographs.) By Frank Sydenham. In Edinburgh is a disused railway tunnel which is employed for the cultivation of mushrooms. We reproduce interesting photographs not only of the tunnel itself, but also of some curious shaped mushrooms which have been grown there.

FOR THE HONOUR OF FRANCE. (Illustrated by C. Lawson Wood.) By John Le Breton. A complete story.

PEARSON'S MAGAZINE.

Now on Sale. Price Sixpence.



Beyond the Light.

The white, dusty road stretched through the sickening glare of the sun in and out among the hills.

The coloured, delapidated house stood away from any shade. The sun went in boldly through the broken shutters.

A woman came outside for a moment and gave a tin cup of milk and a piece of bread to two children who sat huddled together on the fallen step.

The boy was the taller; he was ragged, and his skin showed through his soiled shirt. The girl had tears mixed with the dirt on her face.

She was so little, and it was not unnatural she should cry.

"They took her away in a box," said the boy. "I asked the fat man where. He said: 'To Heaven.' What you think 'tis?"

The other began to cry.

"Let's go," she said.

The boy nodded. His face took on a look of deep thought. He put his piece of bread carefully away. Then he held out his hand.

"Come on."

They crept along the path, looking back fearfully lest they should be seen.

The sun scorched their faces and the road felt hot to their bare feet.

Once they met a cart, but they hid behind the bushes until it passed.

"They took her this way," said the boy. "I watched. This must be the road to Heaven, but I don't see anybody going."

"I'm tired," said the little girl suddenly, and sat down in the road.

The other was in despair.

He looked at her. Then he offered her the piece of bread. She began to cry.

"It's so far off," she said.

"I think 'tis pretty far away," said the boy. His courage began to fail.

"But we'll see her when we do get there. P'raps she'll come a little way to meet us."

So they went on, and by and bye the sun was hidden, and the stars came out, one by one, fastening themselves in the night sky.

The boy limped a little, but he did not complain.

They came suddenly upon a broad, shining stretch of water. The trees, clustering close to the edges, showed their sombre branches darkening the surface, but the moonlight falling on it made a clear, unbroken line of gold.

On the bank, in among the tall water weeds and heavy scented lilies, a boat was fastened.

The boy gave a cry of joy.

"Yonder's Heaven! See the light! That's like what they said, all bright. Somebody there's holding out a lantern to us. P'raps it's her. She used to hold one for me when father made me go out in the dark, 'at looked jus' like that. We're nearly there now."

"It's so dark here, I'm afraid," said the other, but the boy answered valiantly:

"I'll take care of you, I'm not afraid. It's right beyond the light, I know. I can nearly see her."

With an effort he drew the little girl into the boat and, leaning over, tugged at the rope. The rotten cord gave way, and the skiff, with a murmur like a happy sigh at its release, went forward.

The boy put his arm round the girl. The tangled mass of her hair swept his face, and her head fell upon his shoulder.

"I'll wake you when we get there," he said.

He looked down suddenly, for he felt his feet were wet. The bottom of the boat was full of water. He could not understand why.

"But it doesn't matter," he said. "We're almost there."

Just then there came, borne over the water from afar, the sound of music.

The boy held his breath to listen.

Upon the hill beyond there was a little church. Those within had prayed: "From sudden death, deliver us, good Lord."

Now they sang of joy, of hope, of eternal day.

The boy did not know. "It is Heaven," he said.

The water came very fast, but he did not notice it. His eyes were fixed upon the line of shimmering, golden light, and reaching beyond it and above the music's strains, it seemed to him he saw her face. He started forward with a little cry.

The water rushed up, carrying the boat under with a swift, gurgling noise.

Where it disappeared there remained only a stream of golden light.

And the sound of the voices was hushed.

S. L. Bacon.

Digitized by Google

THE SECRET THAT HE KNEW.

LONG after the speaker's words had died away the listening people waited in hushed expectancy, unwilling to believe that he had finished, and unable to descend all at once from the heights to which they had been raised. But the announcement of the last hymn assured them that the service was almost over, and a little later they began to file slowly out through the high, narrow doors into the damp air.

In almost total silence the crowd separated, with the unconsciousness of surroundings which comes to men when their minds have been stirred deeply.

John Ordway and his wife came from the chapel among the last, and walked arm in arm to where many carts and traps were waiting; both had been strongly moved by the evening's sermon, but in different ways, indicative perhaps of their widely differing temperaments.

Ordway helped his wife into the trap, the horse broke into a trot, and the driver leant forward to draw the rug more closely about his companion, peering up into her face solicitously.

"A damp night!" he murmured. "Do you feel at all cold, little girl?"

She started nervously at his voice, and shook her head.

"I'm quite warm enough," she said mechanically.

They moved swiftly past the scattered houses of the village, and out into a stretch of open country. Three or four times the woman raised her head as if about to speak, but checked herself with an effort.

"I have something to tell you, John," she said at last. "I—I am afraid I ought to have told you long ago."

Her tone was so serious that he turned and looked at her with quick anxiety.

"Are you sure you ought?" he asked gently. "Perhaps there ain't any need."

"There is a need," she answered. "I have known all along that it would be better to speak out, but somehow I never felt that I could until to-night."

She paused as though to gather courage. "It's about myself and Willis," she said. "You remember ——"

Ordway bent forward suddenly with a warning shout to the horse, and the cart jolted heavily in a deep rut.

"That's me all over," he said with a chuckle. "I took special notice of that hole so as to avoid it on the way home, and here I am, drivin' right into it again. That's what comes of listenin' to sermons ye can't quite understand."

"Won't you listen to me, John?" his wife asked pleadingly.

"Of course I will," he answered. "Only my nerves bein' so wrought up I'm sort of afraid to have any big shock come on me sudden, ye know."

"You make it so hard for me," she said, "and I am in earnest. Oh, truly, I am in earnest!"

Her voice trembled with the warning of tears. Ordway put his arms round her and drew her closer to him protectively, as a mother soothes a nervous, sleepy child.

"I wasn't joking," he said. "I'm always glad to listen to ye, only I think ye'd best wait till we get home. We're most there now."

The waggon swung a sharp turn, and then, far upon the hill ahead of them, the clear-cut buildings showed against the horizon.

"Go in by the fire," said John Ordway, when at length they rattled into the farmyard; "I'll follow when I've got the mare in."

But when he came back from the stable he found her waiting, leaning against one of the square posts of the porch, and looking out across the darkness of the valley.

"I wanted to wait until we could go in together," she said.

The long, low kitchen was full of changing shadows, which danced across the polished floor and lost themselves in the corners of the irregular ceiling, when Ordway crossed to the huge fireplace and piled some sticks of soft wood on the glowing ashes.

Then, throwing off his top coat, he dragged from the chimney corner a great, old-fashioned chair, and sank back luxuriously in its capacious depths.

His wife had also removed her wraps, and now took a seat at the other side of the fireplace on a low stool drawn back just within the wavering boundary of shadow.

At length she spoke, slowly and with evident effort at calmness.

"You must try to be patient with me," she said. "You'll be astonished, I know, and I am afraid you'll be angry—and I couldn't blame you—but I want you to wait till—till I've finished."

"Are you quite sure ye'd better begin, or hadn't ye better let it go till to-morrow?"

"No!" she said quickly. "I've wanted to speak—to speak so many times, and haven't dared to. I'll feel a thousand times happier when I've told you, no matter what happens. Let me go on now."

"P'r'aps I know what——" he began, but checked himself suddenly. "I'm listenin'," he added.

She hesitated as if to gain strength, and he marked how the slender figure quivered with the effort of her hurried breathing.

"I had promised to marry Willis before I met you," she said unsteadily. "We quarrelled about some little thing, and each was too proud to speak first. Finally, he went away without seeing me. You know how we heard that he died in Africa. I believed it—we all did—and I cried myself to sleep, night after night, because I hadn't acted differently. As time went on I began to forget little by little, and after a while it all seemed like a sort of dream; then you came into my life, and taught me to trust you and turn to you for help in everything. And, in truth I loved you more than you could ever understand." Her voice trembled pitifully.

"You believe me, John?" she added. "Say that you do believe me!"

Digitized by Google

Ordway drew his hand across his eyes with an involuntary movement.

"I ain't never doubted it," he answered softly.

She gave a quick sigh of relief, and let her head sink again upon her breast as she continued:

"I was happy and contented for two long years. It was like Heaven; and you were happy, too, John!"

"Happy!" he said. "Ah, yes; nobody'll ever know how much."

"And then little Dora was born," she went on, "and somehow all our trouble began there, for it seemed as though her baby hands took hold of our hearts and pushed them apart. I actually thought that you didn't care about her—I knew it was wrong, but I thought it—and I got to feeling against you as I would against someone that was watching for a chance to hurt my little one. Well, things got worse and worse, and when she died I almost believed you were to blame in some way—I didn't know how. Oh, it's awful to think about, how I couldn't help feeling that way. Will you ever forgive me for it?"

"I never laid it up against ye," he answered. "It was natural, and I knew ye wasn't well; so I tried to forget all about that part of our life, and I've done it—almost."

She looked up at him gratefully. "You are trying to help me," she said. "Not many men would do that. The rest of my story is harder to tell, and harder to listen to. You remember that Willis came back and hunted me up. He came at the worst time for all of us. I was set against you, and half wild about baby's death, and reckless to everything. He found that out, and kept pleading with me and urging me to go away with him. Day after day, when you were at work, he used to come to the house and talk to me—always in the same strain. I ought to have sent him away, but—I didn't. His sympathy was so ready that I didn't see the purpose nor the falseness of it. It was as though some evil spirit put the words into his mouth, and I listened; Heaven help me, I listened."

She started to her feet, and stood facing her husband, her arms raised to her head in a wild gesture.

"It was no fault of mine that I did not sin against you in deed as I did in thought," she cried. "If it had not been for some accident—I don't even know what it was—I should not have been here now.

"I went to meet him one night. We were to drive to Oakley and take the train for some place. I waited I don't know how many hours, but he didn't come; at last I crept home, and found you asleep. All night I sat by the fire waiting for some word from him, for I was ready to go—yes, even then I was ready to go.

"In the morning, when you were away, a letter came saying that an unforseen accident had happened, and he would let me know about it soon. I never heard from him again."

She paused, and looked at him fearfully, as though expecting a violent outburst of anger, but he said nothing, and at last she spoke again, unable to bear the silence.

"Won't you speak to me?" she cried tremulously. "Haven't you been listening? Have I done wrong to you? Speak to me, for Heaven's sake; I can't bear it!"

The words were lost in a storm of sobbing, and she threw herself down on her knees beside him, hiding her face with her hands on the arm of the old-fashioned chair. Ordway looked down at her through eyes that were dimming.

"Don't take on so, Eunie," he said gently. "Ye'll be glad all the rest of yer life, I think, on account of jest what ye're cryin' about now. Look up, my gurl, an' p'r'aps I can finish the story for ye."

He put out his hand, and stroked the bowed head with clumsy tenderness.

"Ye say ye never knowed why he didn't come that night," he said. "I could a told ye why."

She raised her head with a startled exclamation.

"You?" she cried.

"Yes," he answered, "me! He stayed away because I told him he'd better; and he knowed I meant what I said."

Her eyes grew full of wondering fear, and she shrank away from him; but he smiled again, and detained her with gentle force.

"Wait," he said. "I ain't crazy. Did ye think I was so blind all them months that I didn't see what was happenin'? I'd a knowed if I'd been miles away, for there aint never any trouble in your heart but what I don't feel it. Lord bless ye, I seen what was goin' on, but I thought 'twas best to say nothin', an' let ye wrestle it out alone. Finally, when I noticed that circumstance an' everything was likely to be too much for ye, why, I stepped in an' talked to Willis. He understood, an' that settled it."

"Then you've known?" she interrupted breathlessly. "You've known all this time?"

He nodded cheerfully.

"All this time," he answered.

"But you never said a word to me—you never acted as though——"

"It's always harder for me to talk than to keep still," he said slowly. "Surely you've found that out long ago. I couldn't a said a word without makin' things worse, most likely; so I thought the best thing to do was to jest wait—an' I been waitin'."

"Waiting?" she responded. "Waiting for what?"

"For what's happened, Eunie," he said softly. "Waitin' to hear jest what I've heard to-night; to have ye kneel down here beside me as ye're kneelin' now, a-wantin' the help I can give ye, an' a-trustin' me enough to ask for it."

He lifted his hand to check her question, and went on in the same tone:

"I ain't never been like any of the men ye used to know. Why, for a year or more after we were married, I used to set an' watch ye, wonderin' all the time whether it was really me, an' whether my luck wasn't too good to be true. I was always afraid that there was a mistake somewheres, for it didn't seem right nor natural that ye should see anything in me to care about, unless—unless it was because I cared so much for you; I tried to think that sometimes."

The woman was clinging to his arm, and weeping convulsively.

"'Tweren't your fault, little girl," he said. "It jest happened that way. There ain't no need to cry about it now; the time for cryin's all gone past, an' I don't think it'll ever come again."

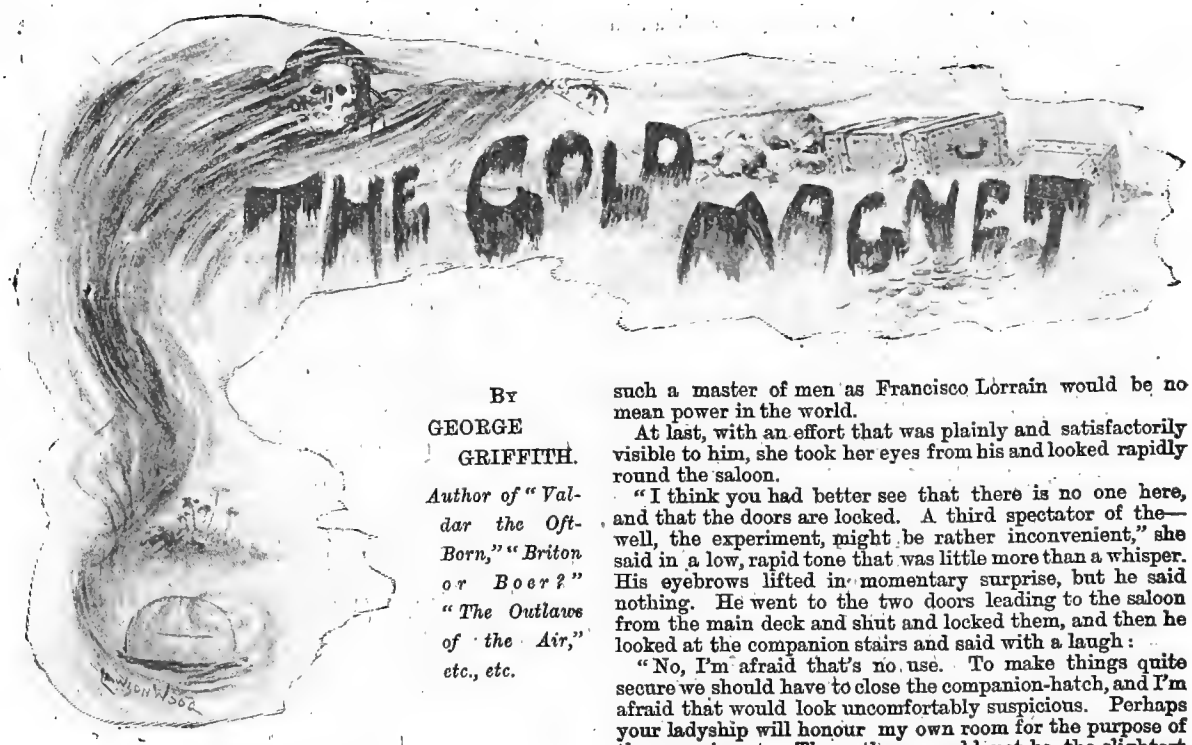
He stopped abruptly, as though half ashamed of his sudden outburst, and let his glance rest lovingly upon the kneeling figure at his feet.

"Ain't ye glad it's happened?" he asked. "Surely ye ain't grievin' over the very thing that is to make us so happy agen?"

She did not answer, and for a moment he watched her in perplexed anxiety. Then he understood, and knelt down by her side.

ETHEL N.

Digitized by Google



BY
GEORGE
GRIFFITH.

Author of "Valdar the Oft-Born," "Briton or Boer?" "The Outlaws of the Air," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE SECOND VICTIM.

WHEN they got into the saloon her ladyship turned to Lorrain and looked at him for a few moments in silence, and he, looking back into her eyes, read in them a curious mixture of undisguised fear and equally undisguised admiration, of submission blended with half defiance, and of resignation tempered with an eager expectation. Many a time and oft he had looked into woman's eyes, usually to find what he wanted and expected in them, but never in all his experience in reading that most puzzling of all riddles, a woman's mind, had he seen so many contradictory reflections chasing each other across the surface of the limpid mirror which seems to lie under the surface of a woman's eyes.

She was utterly in his power and at his mercy, and she knew it. She had more than a suspicion that he had made it quite certain that she should never see her husband again—that, indeed, she might already be a widow. Yet, woman as she was, it was utterly impossible that she could have lived in company with these two men through the experiences of the last few days without making comparisons to her husband's disadvantage, and even at the worst—well, that she had already learnt to contemplate with a something more than calmness. Nor was the prospect altogether unpleasant, for, however much further it might have taken her on her downward course, the fact remained undeniable and inevitable, that, whatever she might once have thought of her feelings towards her husband, they were as milk and water to strong wine in comparison with those with which this splendid and masterly scoundrel had inspired her—for splendid he certainly was in her eyes, both physically and mentally, pitiless and utterly without scruple, as she already knew him to be.

And then, behind all, there was a lurking ambition prompting her to think that though she might begin by being this man's slave, she might end by being his queen—and with gold illimitable to share between them, the mistress of such a master of men as Francisco Lorrain would be no mean power in the world.

At last, with an effort that was plainly and satisfactorily visible to him, she took her eyes from his and looked rapidly round the saloon.

"I think you had better see that there is no one here, and that the doors are locked. A third spectator of the—well, the experiment, might be rather inconvenient," she said in a low, rapid tone that was little more than a whisper. His eyebrows lifted in momentary surprise, but he said nothing. He went to the two doors leading to the saloon from the main deck and shut and locked them, and then he looked at the companion stairs and said with a laugh:

"No, I'm afraid that's no use. To make things quite secure we should have to close the companion-hatch, and I'm afraid that would look uncomfortably suspicious. Perhaps your ladyship will honour my own room for the purpose of the experiment. There there would not be the slightest fear of interruption."

"Very well," she said, "perhaps that would be better."

Then she moved towards the door of the splendidly furnished stateroom, half library, half drawing-room, which Lorrain had placed at the disposal of herself and her husband since leaving Barbadoes.

"But, excuse me," he said, "haven't you forgotten——?"

"What?" she said with a smile. "*That?* Oh no, señor. I don't leave it anywhere where an accident might lead someone to find it. I am going to trust *you* absolutely, first because I wish to do so; and second, because, under the circumstances, I must. But I don't propose to trust anybody else."

By this time they were both in the stateroom and Lorrain had locked the door. She put her hands up to her head, unpinned the little white yachting cap that she wore, and then pulled what he at first thought was a dagger hair-pin out of the thick coils of her hair.

"There! That is it," she said, holding it up by the point before him. "That is the compass that will point our way to El Dorado. Wait a moment and you shall see for yourself."

She took a reel of thin cotton out of her pocket, broke off a piece about two feet long, threaded it through a tiny hole in the middle of the Magnet, and tied a knot in one end.

"Now," she said, "if you have a little gold in your pocket, put it on the table, or your watch and chain will do quite as well."

While he was taking them off, her ladyship went to the door, and then, holding the suspended Magnet at arm's length, walked towards the table. As she approached it, the needle shivered and wavered. Then the brilliant point swung round for a moment towards the watch and chain, and then, when she had got close to the table, instead of fastening itself on to the gold, as it had done to her own watch and chain on that fatal night in Bedford Square, it swung past them, dipped at a sharp angle, and pointed down over the edge of the table towards the floor.

Digitized by Google

"*Sangre de Dios!*" cried Lorrain, for the moment startled out of his self-possession. "What is the infernal thing doing?"

"Only reminding you that you have got a very considerable quantity of gold stowed away somewhere under the floor of this cabin," said her ladyship, laughing again, as she pulled the Magnet back. Then, holding it in her two hands behind her, she faced him and said:

"Well, Señor Lorrain, are you satisfied? Has it not already discovered one hidden treasure? Curious, isn't it, that I should have been in this room so often with this thing in my possession, and yet never known that I was walking about over your strong-room."

"It is miraculous, almost devilish!" he said, with something very like a touch of awe in his voice. "Well, yes I confess that I have a few thousand pounds in a box down there. One can't run a yacht for nothing, you know, and it takes gold to find gold. May I look at it?"

He held out his hand, but she drew back a step and said:

"I am going to trust you, as I said, absolutely, but first I want you to promise me on your honour, I won't say as a gentleman, for that is only a conventionalism, but as a man to a woman who is trusting herself body and soul to his keeping—for that I suppose is what this business means now—that you will never attempt to take it out of my possession. You may think it silly of me to ask such a thing, because, of course, I am so completely in your hands that you could take it from me by force if you liked, but you can afford to gratify a woman's whim in a thing like this."

"I hold but few things sacred, as you know," he answered, taking a step towards her, "but if I swear to you by my hatred of the man who has some day to pay for Patricia's life, then you will believe me. Is not that so?"

"Yes," she said, "I think I can believe that, for if there is anything like what they call Fate, and you broke an oath like that, the revenge might pass the other way. There it is!" and she held the Magnet out towards him on her open palm.

He looked at it closely for a few moments without touching it. Then he picked it up, drew the thread out of the eyehole and said quietly:

"Yes, it is very wonderful, and very beautiful, too; and therefore it could have no better possessor than its present one. And now, as a token of my good faith, let me put it back into its place."

She looked up at him for an instant with a smile that would have set a much colder man's blood on fire, and then, with a pretty gesture, she turned the back of her dainty, proudly poised head with its wealth of thickly coiled hair towards him. He slipped the Magnet back into its place with a touch almost as deft as her own, and then, flinging even the pretence of reserve to the winds, he said in just such a voice as he had spoken to her in on the bridge during the fight:

"There now, you have it back, but I have it still for I have you, *Jessica mia*, and, *Madre de Dios*, I will keep you both, while I have life and strength to hold you!"

She turned swiftly, as though she would have escaped from his arms, but she was too late, for they were already round her in such an embrace as she had never felt before. She had turned her face upward at the moment. The next his lips were on hers, and the next she had forgotten everything save that she was in the arms of the man she loved.

While this scene was being enacted on board the *Minnehaha* a very different one was taking place in one of the old dungeons in the foundations of the citadel of Santo Domingo. There, on a stone bench, fastened to the wall by a chain locked on to a rusty iron band round his waist, sat the man who was fated to be the second of the victims

Don Gregorio entered, followed by two disreputable soldiers.

tzed by Google

whom the deadly glitter of the Gold Magnet was to lure to their doom.

Lorrain had spoken something less than the truth when he had told her ladyship that her husband was perfectly safe and every possible care would be taken of him. He had been taken ashore drugged, and when he had come to his senses he had found himself in as hopeless a plight as any other of the hundreds of luckless wretches who had found that old Spanish cell the ante-room to another world.

How long he had been chained up thus like a wild animal to the wall, he had no notion. There was just a blank of silence and darkness behind him, separating him from the moment at which he had gone to sleep in his berth on board the yacht. It might be only a few hours ago, it might be weeks for all he knew, and his cell door had opened and Don Gregorio entered, followed by two disreputable soldiers of the republic, one of whom carried a smoky old oil-lamp and the other of whom shut the door and put his back against it as soon as they were in.

His head was aching horribly, and an almost intolerable pain shot through his eyes as he blinked at the light. Still he managed to look up at Don Gregorio and say with something like firmness in his voice:

"Well, sir, have you come to explain this abominable outrage on one of Her Majesty's subjects, or have you come to put an end to me in accordance with the orders of that adulterous scoundrel, your friend Lorrain?"

"Gently! gently! *muy señor mio*," replied the Don, who spoke a curious but quite understandable mixture of idioms which he was pleased to consider excellent English. "Yes. It regrets me much to say that it necessitates for you to leave the world. You see you have the misfortune to be in the *camino*—I mean the road, the way, of the honourable Don Francisco, who is my friend and my father and benefactor, and who has given my country back to me, and those who are in the road of Don Francisco always go out of it. No, I have never known one that stayed in it. You are in it, so you must go. It is pity, it is misfortune, very much misfortune for you who is an honourable gentleman, so it is. It necessitates, so that is all. We do not hate you. We have not what you call grudge for you, we respect you, and we are very sorry for you, but you must go. You have seen too much and you know too much, and moreover it is your misfortune to possess a most adorable señora who has found favour in the eyes of Don Francisco. Is not this enough? Can you not see that it necessitates?"

As he said this, Don Gregorio spread out his fat, dirty hands with an apologetic gesture and leant forward and stared with something very like commiseration in his big brown eyes at his prisoner.

Langton Harley was not a man who could be called brave if compared with such men as Leigh Tristam or Lorrain, but he was an Englishman, and an Englishman is usually at his best with his back to the wall. And so it was with Don Gregorio's prisoner. He answered his gaoler not only coolly but contemptuously.

"I see," he said. "Your friend Lorrain has stolen my wife and put you back into a position to rob these wretched niggers, and in return for this service you are to make it possible, by murdering me, for him to marry my widow legally if he chooses. I am in the way and it's necessary, as you say, for me to get out of it, at least from your point of view. You'll perhaps excuse me if I don't see it in exactly the same light. Now, look here, Don Gregorio, you are an infernal scoundrel and I'm absolutely in your power. Therefore I know that it wouldn't be the slightest use trying to make a bargain with you. But if I've got to get out of the world I should like to tell you something of very considerable importance to yourself before I go. Give me a drink of something and sit down. I suppose you are not in a hurry for a few minutes?"

Don Gregorio stared at his captive in wondering admiration. The old Pendril blood in Langton Harley's veins had risen to the occasion, and completely transformed the man. Don Gregorio knew that he himself in such a position would by this time have been cowering and cringing on the floor, begging for his life, and whining like a whipped dog, and here was this Englishman sitting chained, and face to face with death, talking about his own murder as quietly as if it had been some ordinary business transaction.

"Ach!" he said. "The señor is reasonable, as all his wonderful people are. José, go and bring a bottle of wine of my own private best immediately, with glasses. This we will set aside for the present."

"What is that?" said Harley, as he took a small wine-bottle half full out of his pocket, and set it down on the stone seat.

"That?" said Don Gregorio with an apologetic smile. "Well, it is the truth that that is the señor's passport to another and, we will hope, a better and more fortunate world. It has no pain, and it is certain. When the time comes he will drink it. He will sleep and dream fair dreams, but he will not wake. That is all. It is better than to die in darkness of thirst and hunger, is it not, señor?"

"Well, yes, I suppose it is," replied Harley, with just a little catch in his voice as he looked round at the bottle which contained his own death. But the next instant his pride came to his rescue again, and he went on as quietly as ever:

"It was really quite kind of you to provide such a happy dispatch for me. I should have thought something lingering and humorous would have been more in your line. However, you mustn't think me ungrateful, and you shan't find me so, for now, Don Gregorio, I, your captive, whom you have got chained to this wall like a dog, and whom you are going to do the greatest of all injuries to, am going to make it possible for you to be one of the richest men, if not indeed the richest man, in the world."

"Eh? What is that, señor, that you say?" said Don Gregorio, coming forward and sitting down beside him, and laying his hand on his shoulder with an almost caressing gesture, from which Harley shrank with a little shudder—the first during the interview. "What is that? The richest man on earth! You will tell me how to be that, and not even ask your life in return?—though, mind you, I could not give it you, no, not for all the money in the world, for Don Francisco is coming here to-night to see, and if he finds you have not gone to meet the blessed saints in Heaven, well, he will kill me with those infernal guns of his, for he has sworn it, and when Don Francisco swears a thing it is done already. But come, here is the wine. Let us drink and be friends while you remain here."

The soldier came back with a magnum of champagne and two tumblers, and when Don Gregorio had opened the bottle and offered him a tumblerful with the politest of gestures, Harley took it thankfully, for physically, if not morally, he needed a stimulant very badly. He half emptied the tumbler at a gulp, and then Don Gregorio said when he had done the same:

"And now, *muy amigo mio*, what is the story that you would tell me? I am all eagernesss to listen."

"Yes, I dare say you are," said Harley, edging away from him as far as his chain would permit, and turning half round towards him with his shoulder against the wall. "It is just the sort of story that a man like you would like to hear, and yet it is probable that before very long you'll wish to Heaven you'd never heard it. Do you know what your friend Lorrain has come here for?"

"Oh, on some what you call goose's chase, to hunt for buried treasures that we have many stories about in this island, but never seen since the days of the old Spaniards."

"You're wrong there, Don Gregorio, he hasn't come to *look* for them, he's come to *find* them. You may not believe me, but you can find out for yourself in a few days that what I am going to tell you is absolute fact. That woman who was my wife has got in her possession a magnet, a sort of

Digitized by Google

compass needle, you understand, which is attracted to gold and other precious metals in the same way that a magnetised needle is attracted to iron. She wears it in her hair, where you may look for it if you get a chance. Lorrain knows she has it and that is one reason why I am here and she is with him on board the yacht. In a day or two they are going, as you know, up the Oyama to locate a chest full of gold and jewels which was buried under the river-bed by one of the old Governors of this place. They will hang this needle on a thread and they will walk along the river-bank, and when they come to the place, the needle will point straight down at the gold, no matter how deep it is buried. Then they will mark the place and go back and dig it up and, if you allow them, take it away in the yacht. Then they will go to one of the Cays of the Bahamas where there is the wreck of one of the old Spanish treasure-ships, no doubt loaded with gold and silver, and the Magnet will find that for them, and in all probability the *Minnehaha* will go back to England simply loaded with treasure. Do you follow me, Don Gregorio?"

"*Ach mira, mira!* If I follow?" cried the little Don in a voice trembling with excitement. "*Sangre de Dios!* it is marvellous, wonderful, unbelievable, but is it true, señor? Can such a thing be, and has the señora who was your wife really got it? Why, if one had such a thing one might find all the gold that is hidden in the world and be rich, ah rich, so rich that one need not go to these ever-damnable money-lenders of Europe to borrow a little money to support the work of the State. *Ei carramba!* what a thing to have!"

Harley smiled as he said this, and he looked at him and saw his eyes alight, his face flushed, and his whole body trembling with the lust of greed. It was evident that Lorrain would not have sent him to his death unavenged.

"Yes," he said, "a wonderful thing as you say, and you have only to have Lorrain and her ladyship discreetly watched when they go up the river, to convince yourself that it is literally and absolutely true that they've got it. Whether they take it out of the island again or not is your look out.

"But, mind you, Don Gregorio, I have not told you this for friendship. I have told you as a sort of revenge in advance for my own murder. You will find that there is a curse upon that thing. My own father, one of the most honoured and honourable men in England, dishonoured himself by stealing it from the man who invented it. That man was his oldest friend, and he died just as he had finished showing it to him. My father died a few days later. The woman who was my wife stole it from him. I married her because she had it, knowing it was stolen, and so I deserve what is going to happen to me. Now, here I am you see, chained to this wall, with half a bottle of poison beside me, which I am going to drink to escape being starved to death.

"Henceforth you are no longer Lorrain's friend. You are the worst enemy he has on earth, and he is yours. He should have poisoned me himself on board the yacht, and not sent me here to tell you this. It is one of those mistakes that the cleverest of men make, and I think he will pay for it. I wonder which of you will die first in the fight for it?

"But, mind you, don't forget that if you kill him and get it, someone else will most assuredly kill you, and I think I can tell you who it will be—and that is a man named Leigh Tristam. Remember the name carefully. He is married to the daughter of the man who made this infernal thing. He knows it has been stolen, and he knows about that treasure-ship I was telling you of. He is fitting out a yacht, in fact I dare say she's on her way now to find it. He must hear of the *Minnehaha* and Don Christobal's treasure chest. By-the-way, he also knows about that. He will put two and two together and will have little difficulty in guessing that someone on the yacht must have had the Gold Magnet, and and that that somebody must be the woman who was my wife. Then he will come, and Heaven help your friend Lorrain when he does come, or you if you've got the Magnet by then!

"Well, Don Gregorio, that is all, and now, as I don't care about having any more of your company than I can help, I may as well say good-bye."

Don Gregorio sat with staring eyes and open mouth and quick panting breath, and watched him as he uncorked the bottle and quietly poured the fatal draught into the tumbler that he had drunk the champagne from. As he raised it to his lips he looked steadily at him, and said with a savage sort of smile:

"If what you have told me about this is true, you will not leave the world quite as comfortably as I do. I can imagine what your friend Lorrain will do when he finds that you want to steal the Gold Magnet. It will be nothing less than crucifixion or impalement, and he will stand by and watch you die by bits I expect. Here's to you!"

The next moment he had swallowed the poisoned wine at a gulp, just as Don Gregorio, with a cry of rage, was about to spring at him to snatch it away from him. With the last voluntary effort of his life, Langton flung the glass full in his bloated face, and as his eyes grew dim under the almost instantaneous influence of the potent drug, he saw the glass break, as it seemed, in little splashes of blood. Then his head dropped forward on his breast, his body swayed to and fro, and then sank on the stone bench never to move again.

And so died the second of the Gold Magnet's victims, a death better and braver than the life he had lived.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A WELCOME ALLY.

NEARLY three weeks before these events had taken place in Santa Domingo, Leigh Tristram, almost on the eve of his marriage, had heard of a yacht which had been brought home from Monte Carlo by a youthful plunger who had got through some hundred thousand pounds inside two months and, as the advertisement said, "had no further use for her." The vessel was lying at Southampton, and as he thought the description looked likely he ran down to see her. The first inspection proved so far satisfactory that he entered into negotiations with the agents for the hiring of her for six months. But within a few hours these negotiations were broken off in a somewhat unexpected fashion.

It was a lovely evening with a fine, steady breeze blowing straight across the water and therefore just perfect for sailing. Tristram, like most of his adventurous kind, was seldom happier than when he was sitting in the stern sheets of a good boat with the tiller in one hand and the slack of the main sheet in the other, slipping along with a nice leading wind; so as his business was over for the day and the water looked so inviting, he hired a smart-looking, cutter-rigged craft and, taking the owner with him to look after the fore-sheets, he started off for a run down to the Solent.

As they were running across from Hurst Point to Cowes, Tristam's experienced eye singled out from among the crowd of yachts and pleasure-craft a vessel which struck him as being neither yacht nor man-of-war, and yet possessing most of the characteristics of both. She carried guns, or, at any rate, she was fitted for them, and her stem had the outward curve which betokened the possession of a ram, but she had no fighting tops, and her mast and rigging were those of a large yacht rigged as a three-masted schooner. Then again, although the Stars and Stripes were floating from the flagstaff on her taffrail, she carried at her main the pennant of the Columbian Yacht Club, a decoration which no man-of-war of any country could possibly carry. Tristam looked at her, wondering what manner of craft she could be, until his boat had got within a couple of hundred yards of her, and then he said to his boatman:

"Do you happen to know what that craft is? I can't make out whether she's a yacht, a man-of-war, or what. She can't be a United States warship and fly the Columbian Yacht Club pennant, and yachts don't generally carry the armament of a second-class cruiser as she seems to do."

The boatman smiled solemnly, after the manner of his class, and said:

Digitized by Google

"Well, sir, from all they say of her, she's a bit of both. She is called the *Pockawantus*, or some name of that sort. Yankee, I believe it is; anyhow, her owner's a Yank, a very rich young man I'm told, and very free with his dollars. His name's Cortland I believe."

"What! Cecil Cortland?" said Tristam. "Do you know if that's his other name?"

"Well, sir, I can't say that I do, but it might be, you know," replied the boatman in a non-committal sort of way.

"Anyhow, I'll see if it is," said Tristam. "We'll go round and run alongside on the other tack, and I'll leave a card. If the owner's name is Cecil Cortland, I ought to know him."

As the boat went round and ran up towards the formidable-looking yacht, Tristam's mind went back to the day, some two years before, when he and this same Cecil Cortland had been travelling back together from Cuzco to Sicuani, the terminus of the Southern Railway of Peru, twelve thousand feet up among the valleys of the Andes. They had got into a very tight place, in a little gorge where a tributary torrent of the Urubamba is crossed by a stone bridge, about four miles from Cusipati, the only township boasting an inn in all the hundred and twelve miles from the City of the Sun to the railway.

They had been held up here by a dozen disbanded soldiers, for it was just after the Revolution, and a good many of the Presidential troops, dissatisfied with an honorarium of about six shillings for an eight months' campaign, had taken their rifles and ammunition and gone out on the road to collect arrears of pay from the owners of isolated haciendas, and unsuspecting travellers by the wayside. They had spent a very busy half-hour together, and when it was over they were both wounded, Tristam slightly, and Cortland rather badly, but they had laid out seven of their assailants, pitched one over the bridge into the torrent, and so far impressed the others with the danger of the enterprise that they had thrown away their rifles and taken to their heels.

They had made acquaintances casually in the train coming up from Arequipa, and they had ridden together to Cuzco and Yucay. Just chance travelling acquaintances, so far, and then this little adventure had come and made them friends for life, for there is no more reliable basis for friendship than the getting into deadly peril, and the getting out of it again in virtue of each other's pluck and nerve. Tristam had carried Cortland on his own mule into Cusipati, and had nursed him till his wound had healed and he was strong enough to get back to the coast, and at Mollendo they parted, Cortland to go north to San Francisco, and Tristam south to Valparaiso.

"Is Mr. Cecil Cortland on board?" he said, as the boat ran alongside, and his man got hold of the gangway chain.

"He is, sir," said the gangway man with a smart salute that betokened a certain amount of drill.

"That's so," said a familiar voice from the top of the gangway. "I thought it was you, Tristam. Saw you through the glasses as you came alongside. Come right on board and let's know what good wind has brought you alongside the *Pocahontas*."

The next minute Tristam was on the deck of the yacht heartily shaking hands with as good a specimen of the American gentleman—than whom there is no better fellow on the face of the earth—as any man could wish to call friend. He was about Tristam's own age and height, rather more slightly built, but well set up, hard and bronzed, with clear, steady grey eyes, curling brown hair and a close-cut, point beard with little streaks of gold in it.

"Come along to my room and have a cocktail, and let's swop lies a bit. No flattery, but this is the nicest surprise I've had this side yet. What do you think of my new yacht?"

"Yacht?" said Tristam, stopping and looking about him. "Your new cruiser, I should say. Why, you've got your guns mounted and everything. What are you going to do with her? Make a patriotic present of her to Uncle Sam, or go and help the Cubans?"

"Neither," he said. "I guess Uncle Sam's navy 'll be able to struggle along without the *Pocahontas* for the present, and as for Cuba, well, I don't go much on American newspapers, and I'm not going to help those greasers to make another Hayti out of Cuba. Spaniards may be bad enough, but they're gentlemen along side half-bred greasers any day. Walk right in," he went on, as he stopped before the open door of a cosy looking state-room under the navigating bridge. "This is my particular den. Of course, in a ship like this most of the rooms are under the main-deck covered with three inches of steel in case of accident, just to keep the rain out, you know."

"Well, now," said Tristram, when he had thrown himself into a luxurious armchair and lit the cigar which his host had offered him, "I want to know about this ship. How long have you been a millionaire, and what sort of a freak made you buy a man-of-war for a yacht?"

"Well, as to the millionaire first," said Cortland when he had got his own cigar under way, "when I got back to San Francisco after that little scrap with the greasers up in the hills, I found that the old man had struck it very rich in a wheat deal. Meanwhile one of his brothers who owned half the coal in Washington State had died and left me every cent of money and every bit of real estate he had. Then six months after I got back the old man himself went home with influenza and pneumonia, and as I was his only child I got all his, too, and the result is that I've got more dollars than I just know what to do with. I came over here to buy a yacht and couldn't find one I liked. Then I saw in the papers that the King of Assam on some place out east there had had a yacht built for him up at Elswick, which was a good deal more of a fast cruiser than a yacht, and couldn't raise the loan that was to pay for it.

"Well, the notion seemed to strike me, so I went up and had a look at her. I didn't know of any laws that stood in the way of an American citizen having guns on his yacht if he liked, so long as he kept out of the pirate business, and I didn't see why I shouldn't have a cruiser for a yacht if I wanted to, just the same as the Kaiser and the Tsar, and so as I liked the craft when I saw her, and it was just a matter of dollars, well, here she is, guns, ammunition, and all. She is a very comfortable boat, and as His Majesty was dead nuts on speed, we can get over thirty knots an hour out of her at a squeeze.

"I'll tell you she's a daisy to go. The other day one of your big cruisers, the *Terrible*, went for a full-speed spin in the Channel, so I got up full head of steam and started out after her, and when we came back that evening, her skipper was the maddest man in the British Navy. I shouldn't wonder if I went mighty near causing a war between the two countries, for he must have been just aching to blow the *Pocahontas* out of the water when he saw us come creeping up and then edge away ahead of him when his big ship was doing all her twenty-two knots. Yes, she's a smart craft, I can tell you, and if she ever got into a fight I reckon she'd give a very good account of herself. And now, it's your turn. What have you been doing since? What brought you down here?"

"I'm on the same errand that took you to Elswick," replied Tristam, "except that I'm not rich enough to buy a yacht. I came down to see if I could hire one for a few months. The fact is, I'm going to get married in a day or two, and we are going to spend the honeymoon on a treasure-hunt in the Bahamas. That's what we want the yacht for."

"Well, I guess that sounds a bit interesting," said Cortland, leaning back in his chair and blowing a perpendicular stream of smoke up towards the roof of the state-room. "A marriage, honeymoon, and a treasure-hunt! That is about one of the spiciest combinations I've heard of for some time. But look here, señor, you've got to just shut down right away on that yacht-hiring business. If you want a yacht,

here you are on board of one. The guests I brought over from the States in the one I chartered to come here are scattered all over Europe by this time. I have no engagements, no plans, and, though I'm not in need of the dust exactly, I'd sooner go treasure-hunting just now than anything else."

"But my dear fellow——"

"Now look here, Leigh Tristam, you can't stop right there. I know what you're going to say. Trespassing on my kindness, and all that sort of thing, but you'll oblige me by saying something else. If you've forgotten the fact that I owe my life to you, I haven't. You've got a big debt up against me, and one that you'll never collect this side of Kingdom Come, but I've got a chance here to pay off an instalment of it, even if it's only a little one, and I'm not going to let it go; so before you go out of this room you've got to give me the word of the man who stood beside me that night on the Urubamba, that you'll not cross the Atlantic in any other boat than this, and that you're going to give me the pleasure of your own society, and that of the Mrs. Leigh Tristam that is to be, on the trip. See?"

While he had been speaking, Tristam had been thinking, and when he had done, he said, beginning to speak more seriously than Cortland thought the circumstances warranted:

"That's very kind indeed of you, Cortland, very kind, and I am quite sure that the Mrs. Leigh Tristam that is to be, will accept your offer just as heartily as I do, only——"

"We don't wan't any 'onlys' in it," Cortland interrupted, with a wave of the hand in which he held the cigar. "You've said quite enough, and all you've got to do now is to go and get married, and send me word when the trip begins. No, take those cocktails away, George," he went on addressing the steward, who had just come to the door of the state-room. "Take them away and bring me a bottle of the best wine there is on board the ship."

The steward vanished, and presently re-appeared with a bottle of champagne in a bucket of ice. Meanwhile, Tristam, taking up his parable again, said:

"My dear fellow, I should not be doing the right thing if I accepted your invitation without telling you all there is behind it, and as there is a good deal that may interest you, you may as well have it, and if you are still in the same mind when you've heard it, then the matter is settled."

"Which means that it is settled anyway; so now here's the wine, let's take a drink and then we'll have the yarn. I know you don't talk unless it's worth listening to."

"Well, it is just this way," said Tristam—and then he went on and told Cortland the whole story of the Gold Magnet as far as his own knowledge took him, beginning with the death of Arthur Pendril on the banks of the Ozama, and ending with the departure of Sir Langton and Lady Harley Pendril for the West Indies.

"And now," he said, when he had finished the narration to which Cortland had listened with even more interest than he might have expected, "you see it is not only a honeymoon trip. I have come to the conclusion that, by whatever means it got there, the Gold Magnet is in their possession. A thing like that cannot have disappeared utterly without deliberate design on the part of someone, and I've employed what the logicians call the process of exhaustion to the case, and I've come to the conclusion that the only living human being who is likely to have possession of that Thing is the late Sir Langton Harley's son.

"Of course, I haven't even suggested to Muriel that Professor Harley stole it, simply because his daughter Gwynneth is her greatest friend. You'll meet her, because I am going to make it one condition of our accepting your invitation that you shall be my best man at the wedding, and so I had better caution you to begin with. Still no one can have got it out of Earnest Stevens' possession except Professor Harley, and if he had it, it isn't likely that anyone can have got it from him except his son, therefore I think I am justified in concluding that the Gold Magnet has gone to the West Indies and is going to be used in the discovery of Don Christobal's treasure-chest, and I'm going to find them and it. Then the matter is complicated with that Francisco Lorrain——"

"Hold there a moment," exclaimed Cortland, jumping to his feet. "Francisco Lorrain! That's the chap you were telling me about in Peru. Well, I've heard about him since. I had a cable about a fortnight ago from Barbadoes telling me that he'd bought a yacht there, a very fast craft that I wanted myself, called the *Minnehaha*, a holy terror of a ship. A cousin of mine, Vansuyler, fitted her out to go and help the Cubans. You see I was interested in the estate, and when I heard he'd gone under with fever at Cartagena I wrote instructing the agent to buy the yacht for me, and the answer was that she'd already been sold to Lorrain.

"Well now, that looks like sport. You can't go hunting Lorrain in a common yacht. You might as well try and chase a cruiser in a tug-boat. This is the craft that is wanted for that kind of work, and you are just coming right along in her as soon as you're hitched up, so that's settled. Bet your life they're on the *Minnehaha* with Lorrain, and that the Gold Magnet is there too, whichever of them's got it. Yes, I'll be your best man with pleasure if you don't have any speeches at the breakfast, and then Westward Ho! By the great Cæsar's ghost, old man, it was a good wind that brought you alongside this evening. I was just wondering what on earth I was going to do with this craft now I got her, and here you come along with a sample of just the very sort of work she is fitted for. She's yours to command, and so am I till you've seen this business out. Shake!"

(To be continued.)

A SUPERB ENGRAVING

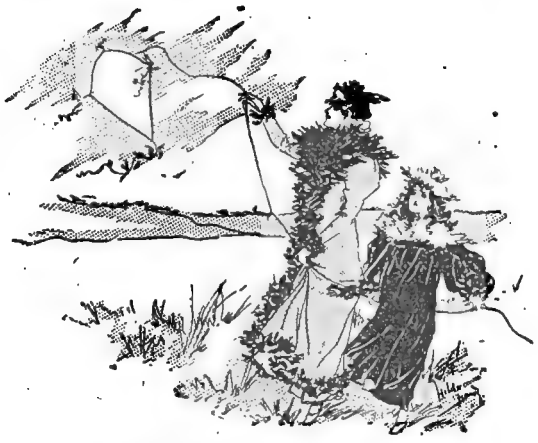
Is given away free with this week's SUNDAY READER, and you should not fail to secure a copy, for the presentation plate alone is worth three times the cost of the entire paper. This picture, which is by one of the leading painters of the day, represents Christ as a boy, sitting in the midst of the doctors at Jerusalem. It is a magnificent conception, splendidly executed, and the engraving given away with THE SUNDAY READER is well worth framing.

The New Year's number of THE SUNDAY READER is only one penny. Here are some of the contents: "Playing Instruments Three Thousand Years Old," "Men who Lived Before the Flood," "A Clergyman who is a Gipsy," "Dogs that Wear Medals," "A Barefooted Bridesmaid," "The Most Religious House;" a remarkable building in which six distinct religious works are carried on; "Business Men at Prayer-meetings," "Cockroaches as Preachers," "The Largest Church Organ in the World," "Buying a Bible with a Forged Cheque," and two complete stories, together with a long instalment of a serial.

The children's page is now a feature of THE SUNDAY READER. There are stories, pictures, puzzles, anecdotes, and competitions, all for the little ones, and every mother should purchase a copy of THE SUNDAY READER for her children to read on Sunday afternoons.

Every Thursday. THE SUNDAY READER. *One Penny.*

Digitized by Google



A YOUNG HERO AT CHILLIANWALLAH.

In the grounds of Chelsea Hospital, where it is regarded with glistening eyes by the old pensioners, and arouses the patriotic feelings of many of the visitors who stroll about the spacious grounds in summer, stands a monument to the brave officers and men who fell in the deadly battle of Chillianwallah, one of the engagements in the war against the Sikhs in 1849.

The battle was fought under tremendous difficulties, and the cost in lives to the British was very heavy for the advantage gained; but in this, as in so many other cases, the dark side of the picture is relieved by the examples or conspicuous gallantry on the part of our men—and, I may add, our boys.

The battle began about two o'clock in the afternoon of the 13th of January. The ground on which it was fought was covered for miles in every direction with jungle of thick, high brushwood; the Sikh army, under Shere Sing, a noted warrior, was formed in order of battle in the centre of this jungle. The position of the enemy was in the midst of steep, precipitous and deep ravines; in addition they had earthworks mounted with cannon.

At the word of command the men went forward steadily, although exposed to a murderous fire. On the right flank our brigade of cavalry was thrown into confusion by some erroneous order and suffered considerably; while a native regiment was so fiercely attacked by the Sikhs and had to make so many formations to repel the ferocious enemy, that it finally charged with the rear rank in front! But onward went the brigade of infantry, and soon issued from the jungle into an opening where they had the opportunity of a bayonet charge.

"Charge!"

The order rang out clearly, and the men needed no second bidding. In grand order and with irresistible force, our gallant fellows dashed up to the enemy's line; the Sikhs poured in a last volley, broke and fled. It was useless to pursue them in the jungle; our men therefore turned their attention to the wounded, and settled accounts with the wounded Sikhs who were propping themselves up as best they could in order to shoot at our officers.

In another part of the battle, the 24th Regiment attacked a strong point on the enemy's position. They were all young men, but when Colonel Brooks waved his sword in the direction of the Khalsa guns, they responded with a British cheer, and went over the intervening six hundred yards at the double. The men were breathless when they reached the guns, but with the blood rushing through their veins, and their faces grim with determination, they swept away the gunners and spiked the guns.

In the midst of this operation they were fired on by some of the enemy who suddenly appeared; the men of the 24th fell in dozens, and before they could properly recover the Sikh cavalry raced down upon them.

One of the officers of the 24th was prostrated by a shot, but not killed. A Sikh bent over him and was about to finish him with a short sword, when his son, a boy ensign—a mere youth—rushed up to the stalwart foe and struck him down. Standing astride over his father's form, the daring lad fought bravely to defend him.

With flashing eyes and uplifted sword young Pennywick awaited the onslaught. Uttering wild cries the swarthy foemen, their faces distorted by passionate fanaticism and the lust of blood, dashed upon the young hero, who met them with undaunted spirit. There was the ring of steel and cries of rage as three Sikhs went down in rapid succession; but what could one boy do against a multitude? Before help could arrive the youthful ensign was struck down. He made one fierce attempt to deal a death blow to the leader of his assailants, and then the mob swept over him and his father, and two brave men were lost to Britain.

The 24th lost its colours, but after the battle the men found the dead body of one of the ensigns, and wrapped round the lifeless form was the flag that had been borne so proudly by the youth to whom it had been intrusted.

"Dear Sir," he writes, "I, my wife, my two daughters (charming girls, one is engaged to an officer and the other has had *two* offers), and my three sons—the young scamps—

Portrait of a sensible man and a kind father.

read your *Big Budget* regularly every Thursday. We all think it is a splendid paper—or rather three splendid papers—and well worth the nimble penny."—Father of Five.

The Murder of Osmond Bedford, Actor.

I.

Standing in Armouth Cemetery is a monument commemorating a terrible crime which has to this day foiled the police. The inscription runs:

> May God's great pity touch his heart, and lead
> My poor murderer to confess his dreadful deed,
> And when the secrets of all hearts are known,
> Guilt and repentance may alike be shown.

The victim who lies beneath is Osmond Bedford, a one-time favourite actor. He was a member of a first-class touring company known by name as the "Strand Merry-Makers," under the direction of Mr. Travis King. Bedford was the "Juvenile-leading man," to style his line in professional language, and was a fine, dashing young fellow of five-and-twenty, tall, handsome, and gentlemanly, with fair curly hair, large and expressive blue eyes, clean-shaven face, and he had the knack of dressing well "on and off the stage."

He was jovial and generous to a degree, but the man, or woman even, with the most fascinating of alluring manners, or the best graces imaginable, is liable to be cursed with an enemy of some kind, no matter what the motive of the latter may be. It may be jealousy, or disappointment, or dissatisfaction at the success of a rival, but there it is; the best of us have our enemy, who will show his teeth at every opportunity—at every turn we take on our journey through life. It was so with Osmond Bedford.

Among his compeers on the stage he had a reputation for large-heartedness, open generosity, affableness, and willingness to help on his lesser fortunate brethren of the sock and buskin, but Harry Humphreys, the low comedian of the company, a soured and withered old stork of the great army of unfortunates whose progress to fortune is somehow barred in a hundred different ways, positively hated him. Nobody knew why, except that Bedford had in his less successful days courted the sister of the disappointed Humphreys, but was now paying his attentions to somebody else.

Some people offered that as the reason, whilst others attributed other motives, alleging that Harry's fraternal love for his sister was not of that desperate order to warrant his taking such a strong dislike to the young leading actor.

The "Strand Merry-Makers" were billed to appear at Armouth. It was a small town, and the old Theatre Royal was of that type that allowed of no dressing-room accommodation for the actors, a desperate state of things that used to be, but which is now happily changed. Four of the gentlemen of the company were dressing together under the stage in a corner which had been purposely screened off or "rigged up" for their benefit. Bedford and Humphreys were among the four.

"I'm awfully sorry for you, old man," said one of the four who was employed most earnestly in the art of "making himself up" for the performance, and, half-dressed, was rubbing all over his face the usual flesh-coloured grease paint that they use, "because the fact of that letter being found in her pocket rather tells against you. Don't you think it does?"

"I know it's a deucedly awkward situation, Rankin, but my position is clear in the matter. She didn't end her life through me," replied Osmond Bedford.

"That's the rub, Mr. Bedford. I'm inclined to think the other way, which is the way that every sane person thinks. No girl would willingly place her neck on the railroad track, and invite death in such a horrible manner as suicide by decapitation, through a trivial misunderstanding only," said Humphreys with pointed effect, at the same time proceeding with his dressing for the stage with perfect nonchalance.

"What do you mean, Humphreys?" exclaimed Osmond Bedford, his face flushing with indignation.

"The explanation is on the surface of the whole thing," curtly replied Humphreys, putting down his stick of grease paint and picking up an evening paper that lay on his desk beside a bottle of spirit gum. He read the following extract out loud:

"'The Mysterious Death of Alice Sugden.

"'The coroner's inquiry into the circumstances of the mysterious death of this young lady, who was well known at Carleton, her father being an old resident of the town, was held this morning. As has been reported,

Digitized by Google

her mangled remains were found on the railway outside Carleton station, but the evidence now failed to prove whether the girl met her death by foul murder, or accident, or whether she committed suicide. A letter was produced found in the dress pocket of deceased, written by a——'"

"My dear sir, you needn't read any more. I know all that. Wasn't I at the inquest this morning, and the story is too sad to have it dinned into my ear again to-night," pleaded Bedford, putting the finishing touches to his make-up.

"Ah, but just you wait a bit. You had to leave to-day before the inquiry was over, hadn't you? Of course, you didn't know how long it was going to last, and we're over thirty-five miles from Carleton, and the trains are not numerous, and when they do run they are very slow. We know all that. But do you know that the inquiry is over—that is for to-day?" said Humphreys, putting his arms akimbo, and looking Bedford significantly in the face.

"No, I didn't know that. Well, I suppose there can only be one verdict."

"Certainly, the right one, but we don't always get at the right thing at coroners' inquiries. That's been my experience. Listen," said Humphreys, holding up the paper again, and reading out aloud as before:

"'The coroner remarked that the facts strongly pointed to murder, and he adjourned the inquest till next Thursday.'"

"I quite agree with the sagacious coroner, for so far as I am aware she had no reason for destroying herself," said Bedford confidently, "and Miss Sugden's been murdered."

"Come, now, Bedford, you know differently. When a fellow takes the trouble to correspond with a girl whom he hasn't any idea of marrying, he ought to know the reason why she kills herself when he throws her over," said Humphreys, coolly turning towards his dressing place, and adjusting a wig upon his head for the part he was playing.

Bedford almost reeled at the insinuation, and throwing down a hand-mirror he was holding, he advanced towards his companion to strike him, but was stopped by Mr. Rankin.

"You scoundrel!" he cried, leaning over his friend's shoulder and shaking his clenched fist at Humphreys, "I'll pay you out for this when the show is over!"

"Yes—well, we'll both pay off old scores," replied the comedian.

"I say, you fellows, we have had enough of this," interrupted Rankin, a good-natured fellow, a man with a peaceful disposition. "Why can't you let Bedford alone, Humphreys?"

"Smart men must pay for their popularity," was the sneering answer of the other.

Incensed with rage, Bedford broke away from his friend's hold, and rushing at Humphrey, dealt that gentleman a severe, and perhaps not undeserved blow on the mouth that sent him reeling to the floor.

"Take that, you blackguard!" cried Bedford, bending over his fallen man.

Humphreys at once sprang to his feet with the swiftness of a fiend incarnate, and literally leapt upon Bedford, whom he pinned against the wall and tried to throttle. He was eventually dragged away by the others, but not before he had severely mauled Bedford. And he was a thin, spare little man was Humphreys, and about forty-five years of age.

II.

Mr. Travis King's daughter—Elsie—was Bedford's *fiancée*, and she was a member of the company, playing lead with him.

"I never saw Miss Sugden since I saw her at Norwich," he said to Mr. King during rehearsal the next day, "now six months ago. I have received many letters from her like other people have who are before the footlights, and who are in the habit of regularly receiving letters and presents from the public. I own I went so far as to send her my portrait, a character one of the part I am playing, at her own special request. When we were playing at Carleton I saw her twice, and on each occasion I told her honourably that although I was not a married man, yet I was not a free man, and that I was engaged to be married soon."

"But you never said a word of this to Elsie," said Mr. King reprovingly.

"No. Why? Because I know her to be of a jealous nature, and as there was nothing in what I did, nothing that I was ashamed of—a thing which I did out of pure kindness and sympathy, and which anyone might have done placed in similar circumstances—I thought there was nothing to tell—nothing to justify my making Elsie unhappy."

"Finding your letter in the dead girl's pocket is bad, bad, bad, Osmond," and the old actor shook his head. "You saw her twice at Carleton, and once again at Norwich."

"She followed us from Carleton to Norwich——"

"Followed you, not us," said the manager, interrupting his favourite leading man.

"I didn't ask her to come, Mr. King," said Mr. Bedford with emphasis. "I declare to Heaven, sir," continued he, with panting heart and crimsoned cheek, "that I have been true to Elsie in thought, word, and deed ever since our engagement."

"Look at the public disgrace the affair has got my company in. Your name coming out so prominently in the case at the coroner's inquiry hits every member of the company hard, and a spiteful public will do the rest for us all—they'll keep away from us. We may as well disband, and go home."

"No, don't do that. I'll punish myself for my sin of sympathy by retiring from the company, although I shall leave my friends here with a conscience clear as daylight, and a mind convinced that there is nothing much to be got out of doing an act of kindness for anybody now-a-days," said Osmond Bedford, striding away from the manager, and walking across the stage.

Seeing Elsie King talking to the other lady members of the company in one of the "wings," he turned that way, and, stopping at a few paces from them and raising his hat, he called out "Elsie!"

She advanced towards him. At the sight of him there was instant silence among the ladies.

"Are you going to cut me, Elsie?"

"I can't amend what my father has told you," said she, with dramatic and withering effect.

"But he has told me nothing."

"Oh, I see. Well, in the face of what has occurred, it will be—er—better—if——"

"If we don't meet again? I see, Elsie. This is unexpected, but as I know your proud spirit, perhaps I ought not to be surprised at your decision; but it is an unjust one," continued the handsome but cowered actor.

"Unjust, when letters from you are found on the body of a girl who finds relief in death? And this at

Digitized by Google

a time, too, when you are, or were, engaged to me," said the actress who recited the speech as if she were delivering it on the stage, with force and pointed bitterness.

"Your father has the truth of the story. Ask him. At any rate, I am going—I think it better to—and as we are sure to meet again, I am certain that when that day comes round you'll be ready to exchange words of sympathy with me. Good-bye, and remember, I have been true to you in thought, word, and deed. I am not responsible for the death of Miss Sugden any more than you are. I wrote those unfortunate letters to her out of pity for her. I know she has been following me about, and her letters to me prove the intensity of her mistaken love for me. I told her that I was engaged to you. I would have told you all this, but I didn't want to make you unhappy. But the girl is dead; by what means, God knows. I am certain, however, it wasn't through me. If it be murder, I suppose it will out someday."

III.

The adjourned inquest on Alice Sugden was duly held, and the jury brought in an open verdict. They exonerated Osmond Bedford from all complicity and blame in the matter, and they even went out of their way to compliment him for the straightforward way in which he had tendered his evidence.

He returned to Armouth. It was summer-time, and Armouth at this particular period of which we write was a rising seaside resort. His old company had taken their departure a few days before, but on the Sunday afternoon that they went away he was enabled to show some of his friends an engagement which he had received only that morning from a London manager. He saw that Humphreys was paying particular attention to Elsie King; in fact, it was a renewal of a friendship that had existed before, and which might have brought the two closer together had it not been for the advent of the dashing, spirited, and handsome Bedford, with whom the manager's daughter soon fell in love.

Early one morning the coastguardsmen at Armouth, seeing a boat at the foot of East Cliff, went and secured it. Looking around, they discovered the lifeless body of Osmond Bedford upon the shore, near by being some of his clothes, all the pockets of which were turned inside out. An examination of the body revealed three terrible wounds. There were two wounds in the back, and another just over the heart, a deep and long one, which had terminated the poor fellow's life. It caused a terrible consternation. There was a general hue and cry for the murderer, but the police were baffled. Many arrests were made, but they never caught the murderer, as the inscription on the tombstone testifies.

Let it be said in all fairness to her, that Elsie King was one of the first to kiss the victim of that awful deed. How she upbraided herself for the cruel way she treated him only a few days before! Her heart was rent with grief. She never left the remains of her lover from the hour of her arrival until he was laid in his coffin and buried.

Three months afterwards, the "Strand Merry-Makers" were playing at Manchester. There was a "call" for rehearsal on the Monday, the company having arrived the day before; Mr. Harry Humphreys was absent. They delayed the rehearsal for him. But he never turned up. The manager sent a special messenger to his lodgings to know the reason of the delay. The messenger returned with the thrilling news that Humphreys was dead—he had poisoned himself. On the table by his bedside was a slip of paper, on which were written these three words: "I follow Bedford."

Those who know better than we do, say that Humphreys was Bedford's murderer. But who can prove it now? Mulvy Ouseley.

1898.

"Pearson's Edition of the British Almanac for the New Year is now ready!"

At first glance this doesn't seem a very exciting piece of information. But it is. It is, because for one shilling—one solitary, unassuming, milled-edged shilling—you may obtain the mass of information summarised below, a free photograph of yourself, a tablet of "Riviera" soap, and discounts off tradesmen's accounts.

THE FOLLOWING IS A BRIEF STATEMENT OF CONTENTS:

Astronomical Information by Mr. EDWARD ROBERTS, F.R.A.S., F.S.S. Eclipses, Star Charts, Notes on Weather, Storms, Clouds, Wind, Metereological Instruments, High Water Tables, etc.

General Information. Calendars — English, Jewish, Mohammedan, Bengalee, Fuslee, and Samvat; also Calendars of the English, Greek, and Russian Churches, and Gardening and Sporting Calendars.

Portraits of past Kings and Queens of England, and of reigning Sovereigns of the World.

Official information respecting Government Officials, Members of Parliament, Postal Regulations and Rates, recent events in the Colonies and foreign Countries, with maps and illustrations.

Provincial Directory of Fairs, Early closing and Market days.

Several beautifully executed Maps by W. and A. K. Johnston.

Seat Plans of principal London and Provincial Theatres.

Ecclesiastical and Educational Section by the Rev. CANON BURNSIDE, Editor of "The Church Year Book." Lists of English and other Church Dignitaries, Church Courts, Colours, Universities, Schools, Board Schools, etc.

Legal Section contains full lists of Law Courts and Officials, and valuable notes on Commercial, Household and Family Law; also advice as to Payment of Rates and Taxes, Qualification of Voters, etc.

Art Section contains lists of the various Art Schools, Galleries and Museums, with regulations and lists of Officials, Heraldic Colouring, Notes on Engravings, etc.

Military and Naval Section. Illustrations of Army Uniforms and principal Ships of recent construction. Lists of Officials, Military and Naval Schools, etc.

Medical Section by Dr. E. P. PHILPOTT. Glossary of Medical Terms, Sick-room Notes, Anatomy, Emergency Notes, etc. besides a lot of Valuable Tables.

Sporting Section by Mr. A. W. BROWNE. Illustrated Notes on latest developments of Billiards, Boating, Cycling, Cricket, Football, Golf, Racing, Tennis, and other sports, also Racing Colours of Leading Owners.

Household Section contains illustrated notes on recent and other dances by Mr. EDWARD SCOTT; Fashions by Mrs. RIVERS TURNBULL; Poultry Keeping and Diseases of Domestic Animals, by Mr. W. B. TEGETMEIER; Pigeons, by Rev. W. F. LUMLEY; Horses and Dogs, by Mr. VERO SHAW; Monthly Dinner Menus, and various useful tables, etc.

Each copy of the Almanac includes:

Coupon entitling to Free Photo of Self.
Coupon entitling to a tablet of Cook's "Riviera" Soap.
Percentage Coupons entitling to discounts off tradesmen's accounts not otherwise obtainable, whereby at least £5 per annum may be saved.

Insurance against Railway Accident for Twelve Months in the sum of £500.

BE SURE TO ASK FOR PEARSON'S EDITION

Digitized by Google

The Lie She Told.

A thousand lights made the great house glow: a thousand roses filled the air with sweetness, and hidden strings sounded tremulous melody.

They sat alone in the conservatory. "Katherine," he said gently, "you know I love you. There is no need of my saying the words for—"

She interrupted him. "Stop! Words like that are an insult. Have you no sense of honour? I had believed you a gentleman: and yet with one of the best and truest of women for your wife, you come to me with this shameful story."

She arose to go, but he prevented her. "Katherine," he said unsteadily, "why should a false sense of honour hold me to my wife when I love you? Since that first day my every thought has been of you. And you love me, too, dearest: I am sure of that. Will you brave the world for me in some foreign land where none need know?"

She twisted a rose in her fingers.

"Yet you loved her once, and she is a sweet, good woman. Then go back to her and your child with what remnant of manliness you can command, and try to repay in some slight measure the wealth of devotion she has given you. It is your business to be true to her, even though you are unworthy to touch even her garment's hem."

He smiled cynically: "You are cruel."

"No, I am only honest. Men like you have no conception of right or duty. You would desert her for me, and you would leave me when the fancy struck you."

A shadow appeared in the doorway. It was Gertrude in search of her husband. Katherine drew her into the conservatory. "You little mouse, how quiet you are! Did you hear what he just said of you? No? Then I'll tell you, but you mustn't repeat it, for it's a secret." She leant over and whispered in Gertrude's ear: "He said you were 'a sweet, good woman.'"

Gertrude's pale face brightened, and her eyes filled. She looked at him in a way that was almost a caress, and they went out together, leaving Katherine alone.

"Oh, Heaven!" she breathed: "what a weak, foolish thing a woman is. A man like that, and yet—and yet—we both love him!"

The other woman's face haunted Katherine.

One day they met in the street. "Have you not heard," asked Gertrude, "he is very ill?"

Katherine assured her of her sympathy. "You must be brave, little woman: that will help him more than anything else. I'll come in to see you after a while."

When she entered, the sick man's voice sounded through the house: "Katherine, Katherine! I want you so!"

She put her pitying arms round Gertrude. "Dear, it's hard for you, isn't it?"

Gertrude's face was tearless. "He was that way all night—calling ceaselessly for you."

"He has confused us, probably," answered Katherine; "you know we were together a great deal, just before he was taken ill." Yet a wild chord of happiness thrilled her at the sound of his voice calling her name, which even Gertrude's look of relief could not lessen.

"I have brought some jelly for him to take when he is stronger."

Katherine handed her the small package.

"I'll tell him you brought it," said Gertrude slowly.

Katherine smiled. "My dear, he won't care who brought it, so long as you give it to him. I wouldn't say anything about it, if I were you."

Gertrude broke down completely. "Oh," she cried between her sobs, "how good you are!"

Katherine drew her closer. "Cry, dear, if you can," she said tenderly. "You are nervous and overwrought, and it will do you good."

"Pull yourself together, Katherine," she said to herself, as she turned the corner: "it is the other woman's heart that is at stake—not yours."

* * * * *

Katherine was in a distant city when the news of his death reached her. After the first shock was over she wrote a letter:

"Gertrude, dear, it is not easy to put on paper the things I would rather say with my arms round you, but I do want to assure you of my love and sympathy.

"I know it is hard and bitter, but there is much to comfort you—the little child who is named after him, and who loves you too. There are many women the wide world over, who would gladly give all their earthly possessions for the love which sleeps in your grave to-day. It is yours beyond the power of change or loss.

"I remember one night, as he helped you with your wraps, the look of love and pride in his eyes, which you did not see, and I thought as you left me, 'there goes a happy woman.'

"Men are proverbially thoughtless, you know, and sometimes they forget the little words which are the very breath of life to a loving woman; but the great feeling lives just the same, and I often think that a woman's finer sight is given her for that very thing—that she may know the unspoken thought of husband or lover.

"Death never changes love, dear; it goes on just the same. Your heart is just as full of him; and who shall say that, somewhere, the same love does not wait for you?

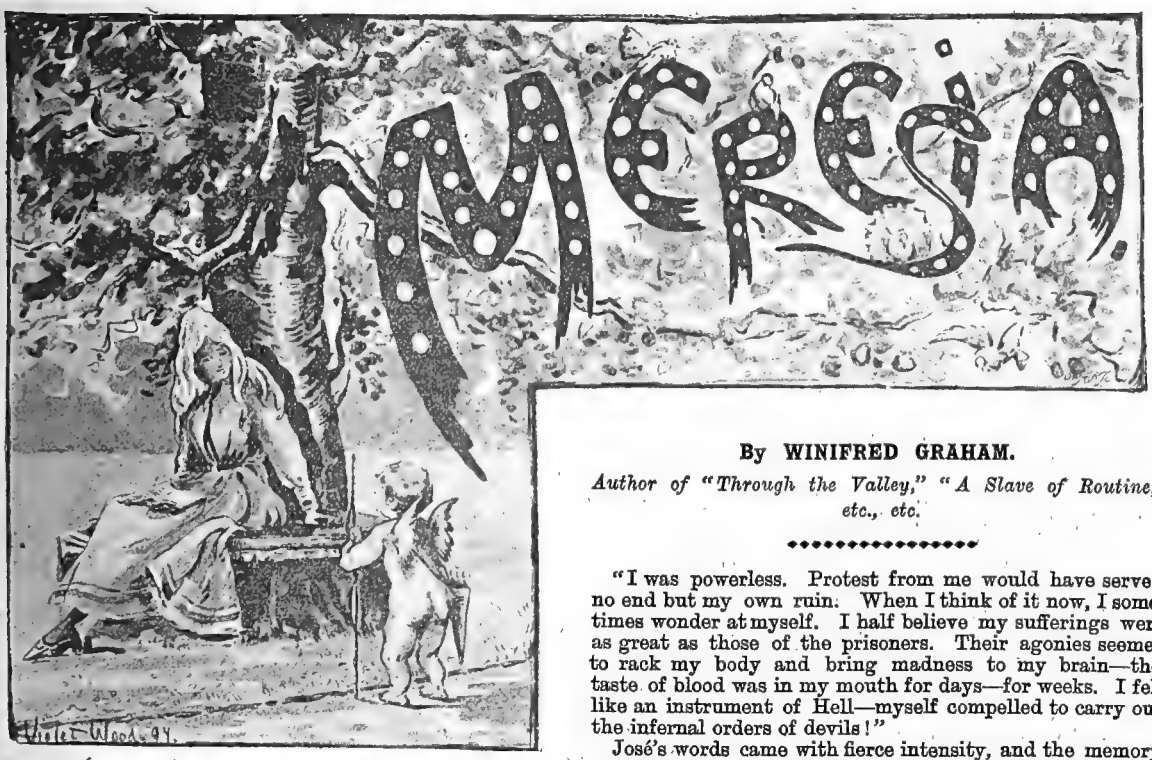
"I can only say 'be brave,' but you are already that, and more, as becomes the 'sweet, good woman' that you are, and, believe me, my heart aches with yours.

"In all love and sympathy. Katherine." She pressed her white face against the window and looked out into the starless night. "God forgive me if I have done wrong, but that comfort is all that there is left for her. Let her believe his love is hers as I know it is mine."

And Katherine smothered a dull, unceasing pain, but the other woman's heart swelled into a sob of thanksgiving.

Myrtle Reed.

Digitized by Google



By WINIFRED GRAHAM.

Author of "Through the Valley," "A Slave of Routine," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE LIFE OF WOMEN IS FULL OF WOE.

"READ this," said Meresia, "read this."

José did not touch the paper, but he bent down over the table and scanned it quickly. She watched his face, but could not see the expression in his downcast eyes.

"Why does this trouble you?" he asked at last.

"Because it refers to my husband, and because no vice or degradation to me is so horrible as the thought of cruelty practised by men of reason and education. I could find an excuse for the wretched savages who sacrifice to idols, for the barbarous deeds of the dark ages. But now, when everything is different, in a country such as Spain, that these things should be is monstrous and unpardonable. I could never have believed it, I should have laughed at the mere idea, but that my husband in no way denies, or even appears ashamed of these scandalous truths!"

"But why do you come to me?" asked José Serano.

"You were a gaoler in the Madrid prison, you must have known of, or seen, these atrocities!"

She fancied he paled at the mention of past horrors, and the lines of his mouth compressed, while Meresia's conviction grew stronger, that his hand, and his alone, exposed such dastardly doings to the British public.

"These secret trials," she continued, "they took place while you were there. The man who could not speak Spanish, and was so unmercifully tortured, did they ever give him a hearing?"

"Yes," said Serano; "finally he was heard, and his statements produced a sense of horror among the audience. I remember that his counsel, while he made his declaration before the judge, remarked with revolting cynicism: 'It seems as though this blackguard needed another lesson in Spanish.'"

"And you," cried Meresia, "stood by and spoke no word—you could endure to do that?"

"I was powerless. Protest from me would have served no end but my own ruin. When I think of it now, I sometimes wonder at myself. I half believe my sufferings were as great as those of the prisoners. Their agonies seemed to rack my body and bring madness to my brain—the taste of blood was in my mouth for days—for weeks. I felt like an instrument of Hell—myself compelled to carry out the infernal orders of devils!"

José's words came with fierce intensity, and the memory recalled brought to his eyes that light of revenge which Meresia discovered for the first time.

"Can you deny," she asked, "that you are the author of these communications?"

Serano was silent. Meresia repeated her question.

"I would rather not say. At least the writer has my sympathy and support," he replied.

"I ought not to have asked you. I understand—I, as the wife of a Spanish judge, and the very one to whom this alludes, should be the last to expect your confidence. I have always guessed that you were my husband's enemy, it puzzled me, but now I am not surprised; I only wonder how you could have endured to be near him, to live under his roof, to break his bread."

As José listened to Meresia, he wondered if anger for him, or scorn for her husband, brought the bitter ring to her wonderful voice.

He saw that the youth and joy in her face had fled, that the tragedy of knowledge changed her, making Meresia none the less beautiful, but marvellously unlike her old self.

Here was a woman to whom he could have given his confidence, unburdened his soul, had not fate made her the wife of Alfonso Aladros. As such she was tainted in his eyes, she was part of a being loathsome to him, the half of a thing unclean.

"Talking will not better facts," he said. "Go home and forget about it, Mrs. Aladros. All wrongs will be righted some day in this world—or the next."

"In this world," she said slowly. "It is the only world of which we can be quite sure. Do you think it is nothing to me that I have married this man? Am I a child that I can go home and forget? He won me for his wife from the sheer persistency of a prolonged attack. He pursued me with relentless energy, exercising such extraordinary will power that he finally conquered. I gave myself to him in a moment of hysterical passion, caused by a new disease of the nerves called the fascination of hate. He was like a serpent. I could not escape him. I knew it, just as his

Google

LOVE STORIES,

The Companion Paper to
SHORT STORIES,

APPEARS EVERY WEDNESDAY

. . *And Costs* . .

½D.

victims knew they must suffer torture or death when he said the word. That is the solution, Mr. Serano, if you, as my husband's enemy, care to know the true inwardness of my marriage problem. The fascination has gone, but the hate remains, though it slept until to-day. Now it has come to life with the knowledge of his character, his deeds, and the dark passages in that career of which he told me nothing. So at least you and I have something in common. We are both at enmity with the same man."

This unexpected confession on the part of Meresia broke down some of José's guarded reserve. For a moment he let her see him as he was—a man of hot blood, consumed by fiery indignation against the persecutors of the helpless. He spoke words that were rash to be uttered in the presence of the judge's wife, but they were sweet to Meresia, since they re-echoed her own sentiments.

But scarcely had the words passed his lips than his old caution returned, and he cursed himself for a fool.

Meresia drew slowly nearer, her eyes blazing and her breathing quickened by excitement. She leant forward, so that a whisper, hardly audible, could be caught by José.

"You, then, at heart are an Anarchist!"

Her words shot home and startled Serano from his studied politeness. He struck the table with his fist, and the white bone of his knuckles shot through the red.

"You lie," he answered, looking her straight in the face with a candour born of necessity. "Madam, in Heaven's name I swear—you lie!"

Seeing his agitation, Meresia shook her head. His emphatic denial and twitching lips told their own tale.

"Enough," she replied. "Another time, Mr. Serano, be more careful. That is how men betray themselves. But rest assured that I shall not breathe a word of what has passed to-day. I came to question you about this article, and I have found out all I care to know. If at any time I can help you, ask me. As a woman I can do nothing alone, I am so ignorant."

She turned away with bent head, a crushed look on her beautiful face, as if her youth had died a death of shame.

José gathered up the furs she had forgotten, and wrapped them about her.

She fastened her cloak mechanically, forgetful of the cold.

"Good-bye," he said, "and Heaven help you! Without love I can scarcely wish you happiness."

"Wish me insensibility—release. Have you no prescription to cure a throbbing at the brain and heart? There is no bright word of hope, no sweet word of peace for me, only a multitude of waters—without a shore. I am a woman widowed, for how can I call the man 'husband,' whose presence makes me shudder, and whose soul is stained with the grossest offences?"

Her words remained in José's mind long after she had left him. The mysterious notes in Meresia's voice warranted that. Once or twice Serano found himself repeating them. "The grossest offences—yes, the grossest, the vilest—she was right," he said.

As Meresia drove home she began to devise ways of avoiding her husband. Her ideas were not very clear; but she had an indefinable longing to go away, if only for a night, to some quiet retreat where she might rest and think. Not to friends, who would be curious and talkative; they could bring no comfort.

She remembered that her old nurse, Sally Biden, lived at Isleworth, and occasionally let rooms, dignified by the word "Apartments" on a card in the window. Why anyone should wish to go to Isleworth was a mystery to Meresia. The place always seemed a monotonous succession of road and path, without attraction of any kind to the casual observer; but the prosaicness of this unromantic suburb commended itself now to Meresia for the very reasons that would have made her shun it hitherto. Alfonso would never dream that she had sought the shelter of Sally Biden's semi-detached villa, when she left a note excusing her absence, but furnishing no reason for this sudden desertion.

He was out when she reached her home, and, eating a hurried lunch, Meresia left with her bag on a hansom, and a sigh of relief.

"Of course, it was very purposeless," she told herself; "but Aladros must learn that in the future her *rôle* would be independence. If she preferred the company of Sally Biden, then with Sally Biden she would stay."

This thought of freedom brought lulling dreams, and in the train she closed her eyes, picturing herself a girl again.

Back at the old home, back during summer months, with the soft grass under her body and the burning glare in her face, she lay, taking her favourite sun-bath, with Tina keeping guard and pawing her loosened hair. She could see the shadowy lines of the trees and remember the "long, long thoughts of youth" with joy that was almost pain.

"My heart goes back to wander there," she murmured, still keeping her eyes closed, "and among the dreams of the days that were, I find my lost youth again."

Even as she spoke, crushing reality dispersed the pleasurable fancy, and proclaimed her the wife of Alfónso Aladros, bound by the Word of God and the law of man. She trembled at the recollection of the sudden dislike and horror with which he had filled her that morning.

All her calm self-possession, her moderation, of which Elizabeth sometimes spoke, had taken to itself wings and deserted her in the flood of circumstances. Now she felt convinced it would never return, like the dove, to the Ark. Henceforth must stormy billows be faced—the horrors, the crimes, the sins, the woes! Her heart was like a graveyard—her thoughts and faculties stood still before the ghastly phantoms—the ghosts of transgessors whom Aladros had given over to the tormentors.

She recoiled at the sordid memory of the torment, and her senses, which a few moments ago inhaled the sweetness and fragrance of the old summer home, absorbed afresh the foul air, the tainted atmosphere of London.

In a restless, miserable frame of mind she reached the abode of Sally Biden, and startled the poor old lady so that she trembled with joy and surprise, and fell to weeping

Digitized by Google

because her dear Miss Meresia had never set foot there since the Lord gave her a husband—a brave gentleman from Spain, so she had heard say.

Meresia soothed her with many kind words and caresses, and announced her intention of spending the night with her.

"You can get a room ready for me, Sally, dear, can't you? I know you do not like being taken unawares, but I don't care about dinner, or anything, so long as you give me a cup of tea with you, and a fire to go to sleep by. I am very tired and a little sad. Ah! nothing you would understand."

"It's just the way," said Sally Biden, shaking her grey head, "with rich and poor alike! No one can't be always happy, not even them as is beautiful and blessed like you, Miss Meresia. There! I dare say if we knew, the Queen of England 'erself ain't altogether satisfied."

"Some more, some less," quoted Meresia, "but of the whole not one quite happy—no, not one."

"We've got the big bedroom to give you, deary," said the woman, stroking Mrs. Aladros's handsome furs with pride and admiration, "no one ain't used it since my poor lodger, what was an all-the-year-round customer, passed away in late autumn quite sudden like. He was a medical, and that cheery, it did my heart good to hear him whistling about the place. His hat is still a-hangin' on the door, for Mary and I couldn't abide to take it down, for he'd put the peg up himself and spoilt my panel a-doing of it. Mary shall take your bag up and unpack your things, and we'll make you real comfortable."

So the old woman prattled on, and continued to call her "Miss Meresia," which term was singularly acceptable to Mrs. Aladros.

"You shall have a cup of bovril and some poached eggs with your tea, deary; you always liked your eggs poached in the nursery. And didn't I spoil you! Bless your pretty heart!"

Meresia found the eggs on toast less appetising than of yore, or perhaps it was that she had no hunger to relish them.

Sally Biden protested at her scant appetite.

"It's but poor pickings you're taking, Miss Meresia; married life don't make you no healthier, I reckon, or maybe it is the London air what puts you off your feed. Come and sit in the front parlour, deary, in the big chair, and don't fret yourself and eat to be pleasin' me," seeing that Meresia returned to her discarded food.

Mrs. Aladros accepted the invitation of the parlour and the big chair gratefully.

Sally Biden's presence soothed her troubled nerves as none other would have done, for she was associated with childhood's days, which were hallowed to Meresia with tender memories.

CHAPTER XVIII.

TRACKED AND CAPTURED.

"ARE you comfortable, deary?" asked Sally Biden.

"Oh, yes," said Meresia, perching her feet on the fender, and resting her ruddy gold head on the shiny horse-hair back of the big parlour chair. "Isn't it nice to be sitting over the fire, and pretending the old days have come back? I always made pictures in the coals, didn't I, Sally? Even when I was quite tiny, and you used to hold me on your knee and warm my toes by the high guard. But they were such different pictures then; fairies, and knights on horseback, and wonders of many kinds. Now they are all so prosaic, Sally—faces that are not pleasant—and a red-hot burning sea, that only means flame—and nothing more. Perhaps I have lost my imagination, or put it away with childish things."

"Perhaps you're thinking of your good gentleman more than fairies and such like. I was a bit afeared at first, deary, when I heard say as you'd married a furriner. But, praise the Lord, your dear mother has told me what a noble creature he is, and that a happier couple never went away alongside each other from the altar. I've prayed and prayed about you, deary, this many a long day, and always that it might be put into your heart to come and see your old Sally."

"Why were you afraid," asked Meresia, "when you heard he was foreign?"

"Because my step-sister's cousin's aunt, what lived in the North, and was the pick of the bunch, being that comely and buxom, came to service near London at eighteen years of age. She met a furrin person, a man what sold music in a piano shop, with long hair and a mouthful of an Italian name. Well, nothing would do but that she should marry him straight off. There wasn't no rice at the weddin' nor nothing, for he flurried and bustled the poor girl so, she'd hardly time to do her bit of sewing and trim up her Sunday gown. Oh, that man, he were a caution!. Temper—well, there! it was somethink shocking to hear him swear, and her so timid and cowed, poor soul! Last of all, he frightened her that dreadful she packed up her trunks and took herself off. But he wasn't going to be bamboozled. He scoured the country till he found her, and, thinking as it was another man what had got her away, he out with a revolver and let fly full in her face. Then came an inquest, and a hangin', and lots in the papers, written in big letters, and all caused by marrying a furriner, what didn't understand English ways."

"How horrible!" said Meresia. "I wish you had not told me."

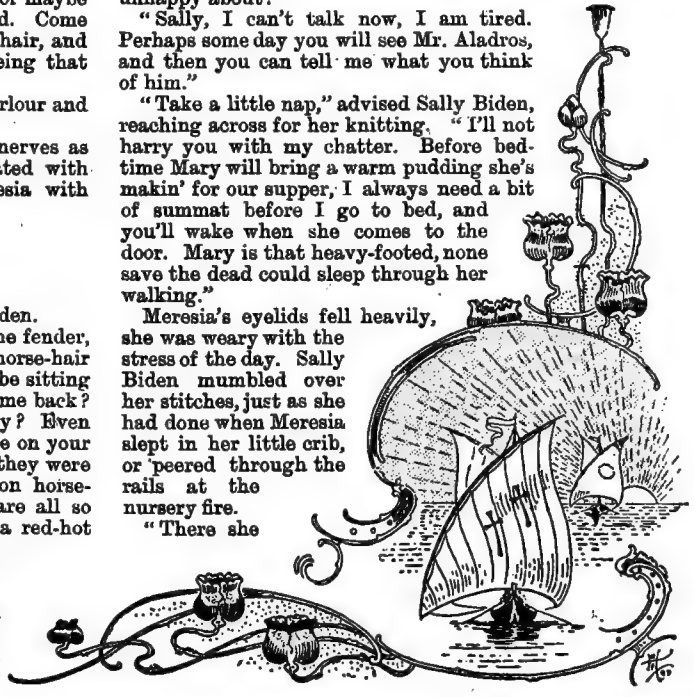
"But of course, deary, that was only one case; it don't happen every time. Jealousy's an awful thing when it do break loose, and frets the bones of a body real badly, take my word for it. But you won't make your gentleman riled, with your sweet, dear ways, and your good, true heart. He ought to be one of the best to be worthy of the likes of you."

Meresia said nothing, but as she gazed into the fiery sea, with its ships of black coal, and its shores of grey cinder, the red of the flame seemed to reach her eyes, and burn them with blood.

"You don't say nothing, deary! It ain't him as you're unhappy about?"

"Sally, I can't talk now, I am tired. Perhaps some day you will see Mr. Aladros, and then you can tell me what you think of him."

"Take a little nap," advised Sally Biden, reaching across for her knitting. "I'll not harry you with my chatter. Before bedtime Mary will bring a warm pudding she's makin' for our supper, I always need a bit of summat before I go to bed, and you'll wake when she comes to the door. Mary is that heavy-footed, none save the dead could sleep through her walking."



Meresia's eyelids fell heavily, she was weary with the stress of the day. Sally Biden mumbled over her stitches, just as she had done when Meresia slept in her little crib, or peered through the rails at the nursery fire.

"There she

is, stumping like a trooper, drat her!" said the old woman. "It ain't time for the pudding yet: I tell you it ain't time——"

Her jaw dropped, her eyes dilated, as the door opened and the imposing figure of a man, gigantic in proportions, appeared, apparition like, before her wondering gaze.

Meresia stirred, but did not move her head.

"I don't want anything to eat, thank you; I am not hungry," she said.

The low, sweet tones fell on her husband's ears; he motioned to Mrs. Biden not to speak.

As he moved slowly across the room, a paralysing dread crept over Meresia. She saw Sally's face marked by innumerable lines of interrogation, and was suddenly conscious of Alfonso's presence.

She tried to turn, but her blood was frozen, and her limbs stiff. The days of his courtship returned with uncanny vividness, when upon various occasions Aladros would appear at the most unexpected places, like a superhuman being, knowing without being told.

He came right up to her chair, and laid his huge hand firmly on her shoulder. The clutch filled her with deadly terror, and she thought again of the shuddering wretches that hand had condemned to inhuman torture.

"Not hungry?" he said, with sarcastic emphasis. "Well, it is early yet. We shall be back in town for supper."

Meresia half rose, but her limbs refused to support her, and she sank back speechless.

Sally Biden watched the two faces curiously: Meresia's—pale, motionless; and his—smiling, contemptuous, cruel!

The old woman could have cried aloud in her consternation, for she saw the pain in her "deary's" eyes, and the hard glitter of the man's as they lighted upon his wife.

She thought of the foreigner in the music shop, and trembled for Meresia's safety.

Alfonso turned and spoke in courteous tones:

"I see you have taken good care of Mrs. Aladros; I am much indebted to you. Unfortunately I must rob you of her company to-night; but I am none the less grateful for your hospitality. I have asked your maid to fetch her wraps. The carriage is waiting."

"Sally, this is my husband," said Meresia feebly.

She dared not refuse to return. He had tracked her and caught her; she was caged for the time.

Mrs. Biden courtesyed low. This tall, dark man, in his long fur overcoat, impressed her with a sense of awe.

"It's done my heart good to see your dear lady," faltered Sally Biden; "and there's the big room warm and ready, double-bedded and aired, if so you'd do me the honour to stop."

Aladros appeared so utterly out of proportion with his surroundings that the idea provoked a veiled smile. He pulled his dark moustache and refused in the flowery language that came most easily to his tongue. Mary appeared carrying Meresia's bag and cloak; it was as much as she could do to stagger beneath them.

Aladros relieved her of the cloak, and flung it about his wife. He could have picked her up, wraps and all, like a feather, and borne her away, but though the impulse came to him, for the sake of conventionality he refrained.

Sally Biden, now convinced that the parting was imminent, and seeing Meresia's lips were trembling, brushed aside a tear with the stocking she was knitting, and clasped Mrs. Aladros to her heart.

"Good night, deary, and good rest to you," she whispered. She could say no more, for Meresia's unexpected arrival and abrupt departure sorely puzzled the poor woman. She felt there was trouble in the air—a storm brewing—but of what nature she could not guess.

"You have been so kind to me, Sally," replied Mrs. Aladros, kissing the withered cheeks tenderly. "I wish I could have stayed."

This last sentence was said with such fervour that Alfonso winced and flung the door open impatiently to signify he was tired of waiting.

"Come," he said, "you have kept the horses standing long enough."

Meresia obeyed. It was dark, and he took her arm to guide her. She seated herself in silence by his side, shivering slightly in spite of the huge rug he drew over her knees.

Sally Biden watched the carriage roll away, bearing Meresia back to London, in the keeping of her husband. Long after the sound of the horses' hoofs died in the distance, the old woman stood, forgetful of the cold, straining her eyes in the darkness and mumbling to herself, as she stared down the long road. Mary came out and remonstrated, with a shawl over her head and a duster held to her mouth.

"It be freezin'," she said, "and you'll catch your death of cold. I've stirred up the fire, and I'll get the hot puddin' straight away, if you'll come in ma'am out of the raw air."

Sally Biden suffered herself to be led indoors by the little maid.

"I don't want no puddin' now, Mary," she said sorrowfully. "I haven't the heart to eat it without Miss Meresia. She looked that sad as she said good-bye, with the tears in her pretty eyes. I could have cried outright but for the stern face of 'er furrin gentleman, and him almost knocking a hole in the ceiling with his head! I can't make no good out of it anyway, for he did not mean any kindness coming after Miss Meresia this time of night, when she was sleepy, poor darling, and wanting to be in bed. He might have let her bide in peace along of me until the morning. There seemed no sense in going back as far as I could see. But mark my words, Mary—it ain't all roses for that dear child! The eye of 'im was real terrifying, when she was a kissing of me, and sort of wishing to stay under her breath, and afraid to speak out her own mind. Do you think I couldn't feel her trembling, just as she did in the old days when she dreamt of bogies, and cried out in her sleep? It's made me regular uneasy, I feel as I do before a thunderstorm, weak at the knees, and a bit faint."

Mary listened sympathetically.

"It gave me a fine turn when he came walkin' in at the door, as if the whole place belonged to him—and what with all the talk of burglars about the town—I could have screamed!"

Late into the night the two women talked of Meresia, for she and her husband made an event in their lives, so appallingly monotonous from day to day.

For a time Alfonso sat in silence by his wife—who leant back with closed eyes unwilling to speak. At last he felt a little vibration under the rug, and she broke the trying hush with a low remark.

"Why did you come, and how did you know I was at Isleworth?"

"I came because I wanted you. I told you once before Meresia that I always should know your movements, even if you were the other side of the world, yet you thought you could hide from me within a few miles of London. Now I must question you. Was it because of that article that you tried to avoid me? Did it really annoy you?"

"Yes, I have been haunted by the thought all day."

"Then the sooner you forget these silly fancies the better. It is no business of yours, and your agitation on behalf of the prisoners is a foolish affectation, or the outcome of hysteria. If you had been in your usual health, you would have looked at these matters sensibly."

"But I was in my usual health——"

"No, you can't deceive me, Meresia. You went to Dr. Serano's, and that showed you were not well. There are very few hysterical women who have the sense to consult a medical man when they begin to be a nuisance to themselves and everybody else."

"If I was a nuisance, why couldn't you leave me in peace with Sally Biden? Perhaps that was part of my sense, too—I wished to avoid you."

"An impossibility!" said Aladros.

(To be continued.)

Digitized by Google

CORPULENCY THE THIEF OF TIME.

THAT procrastination is the Thief of Time is a truism so obvious that it has no claim to be regarded as an epigram. To more practical purpose it may be urged that Corpulency is, in very many cases, the parent of procrastination. The putting off till to-morrow what can be done to-day certainly becomes a mental habit, but it is unquestionably very frequently begotten by physical conditions which render exertion irksome. That in the majority of cases procrastination is easily curable is one of the considerations suggested by a perusal of Mr. F. Cecil Russell's "Corpulency, and the Cure," the remarkable popularity of which is evidenced by the recent issue of the 18th edition. The enormous mass of correspondence which this expert has accumulated, and many extracts from which are included in the 256 pages of this little book, forms the most valuable addition which has yet been made to the literature of obesity. It is specially notable that a very large proportion of Mr. Russell's correspondents who have undergone his course of treatment for the reduction of obesity emphasise the renewed vigour which they have experienced after passing through the process—a wonderfully rapid one, according to this method—of banishing their superabundant fat. The universal adoption of Mr. Russell's system by corpulent persons of both sexes would increase, by a stupendous percentage, the working capacity of mankind. The rapidly-growing popularity of the treatment is due, doubtless, to the author having discarded all the obsolete notions about semi-starvation being requisite to insure comely and comfortable slimness. It is certain that the more the marvellous possibilities of Mr. Russell's system become known, the less will be the tolerance for the laziness of people who decline to reduce their overweight by the pleasant and facile means which are described in this little book, which can be had, post free, by forwarding two penny stamps to Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C.—*Liverpool Daily Mercury.*

REDUCTION OF SUPERFLUOUS FAT.

We have received a copy of "Corpulency, and the Cure," and a very useful and well-written little treatise it is, showing how from 3lb. to 14lb. of fat can be harmlessly removed in a week. We quote rather an amusing extract which was published on the subject by the *European Mail.* The Editor says: "I noticed the other day that someone had contributed a paragraph containing instructions for persons who wished to reduce their weight. I don't doubt but what, if the advice given was followed, the desired effect would result; but to follow it out properly one would not have much time left during the day. Care was to be taken not to eat this and not to eat that, while to dream of certain drinks was sufficient to increase the weight by about a hundredweight. Now, Mr. F. C. Russell, of Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C., is my man. His treatment does not consist of any starvation business. Quite the contrary, for the mixture he prescribes is an invigorating tonic, and improves the appetite wonderfully. He treats corpulence as a disease, and so long as his instructions are followed no one need worry about dietary restrictions, but jog along in peace, and continue the usual breakfast of half-a-dozen poached eggs, two or three gammon rashers, and a pound of steak. It is a good job for the success of the 'Pickwick Papers' that the book was written before Mr. Russell came upon the scene, otherwise it is doubtful whether we should have ever heard of those jovial characters, Mr. Pickwick, Mr. Weller, senior, or that truly wonderful being, the Fat Boy. The only case I can speak of personally in connection with this mixture is a friend of mine, who tried it with remarkably good effect. He was enormously fat, and, although he did not believe in Mr. Russell's treatment, when someone told him the mixture made a very pleasant drink in hot weather he tried it for this purpose. This was in June, a few years ago. In September he had to be measured for a new suit of clothes, as those he had were getting very loose, and didn't fit at all. He continued with the mixture, and the tailor had to take fresh measurements at Christmas—well, he didn't quite have to put on a couple of overcoats so as to make a shadow, but the measurements round his waist were just half what they were twelve months before. Like a sensible man, he always recommends Mr. Russell now wherever he can. So do I." His book only costs two penny stamps, but is worth a guinea. Send to Woburn House for it.—*Boston Independent.*

TO METAMORPHOSE FAT PERSONS.

We were reading in the *Penny Illustrated Paper* how to reduce obesity, wherein it says in that very excellent publication: "The corpulent will be glad to learn how to lose two stone in about a month, with benefit to health, strength, and muscle, by a comparatively new system. It is a singular fact that the patient, returning quickly to a healthy state, with increased activity of brain, digestive and other organs, naturally requires more food than hitherto; yet, notwithstanding this, he absolutely loses in weight one or two pounds daily, as the weighing machine will prove. The 'recipe' can be had gratis from Mr. F. C. Russell, Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C., by sending cost of postage, twopence." We had the curiosity to send to this specialist, and found to our surprise that he had discovered a simple herbal remedy, most pleasant to the taste, which entirely disposed of the necessity of starving oneself if he wished to be rid of all superfluous matter. An interesting point which goes to prove that the almost magical compound is, beyond doubt, harmless, is that in prescribing it in a tentative way to lean persons, or, rather, to those who carry no superfluity of fat beyond that which is required as fuel for Nature's furnace, the medicine is absolutely inoperative, attacking only that unhealthy, disease-creating waste accumulation, which is the burden of the fat creature's existence. In many cases where people take decoctions reputed to be new medical discoveries to cure some specific disease, they may recover by the action of the medicine, or Nature may have effected her own cure. In the case of corpulency, if a simple remedy undertakes to reduce a person, say, seven pounds in a week, all that one has to do is to get weighed, and thus prove it conclusively. So it is with Mr. Russell's compound, but he asks you to prove it in twenty-four hours only.—*Rochdale Star.*

Digitized by Google

YOU AND I.

THE winner in the picture word competition is Mr. James Matthews, "The Elms," Newbury, Berks.

JACK TAR would like to know how the North American Indians get such funny names.————When a child is born among the Indians, the medicine man in attendance goes to the opening of the wigwam, and looks out. Whatever his eye first rests upon is to be the name of the child.

PAUL.—The Prince of Wales' plume worn on State occasions is worth £10. The feathers are pulled from the tail of the feriwah, one of the rarest and most beautiful birds of India. Great expense and trouble are necessary to capture the bird, which is found only in the wildest jungles.

WHEELER writes: "What is the cause of the humming of the telegraph wires, which can be heard distinctly when passing them by the roadside? Am I right in conjecturing that the noise is caused by the wind?"————No; the wind has nothing to do with the sound. The vibrations are due to the changes of the atmospheric temperature, and especially through the action of cold, as a lowering of temperature induces a shortening of the wires, extending over the whole of the conductor. A considerable amount of friction is produced upon the supporting bell, thus inducing sounds both in the wires and the poles.

MADAME asks: "Is it true that sunshine is injurious to mirrors?"————Most decidedly it is; that is, if the sun shines directly upon the back of a looking-glass. The action of the sun upon the quicksilver has the effect of finally rendering the glass incapable of reflecting an image.

SIRE.—The title of Colonel comes from a word almost the same in several languages, signifying a column. The colonel was so called because he led or commanded a column.

AN OLD FRIEND.—Here are two different ways of making ink which is colourless, but turns yellow on being heated: (1) Saltpetre dissolved in a large quantity of water. (2) Sulphate of copper and sal ammoniac, equal parts dissolved in water.

BIG BEN writes to asks if it is true that projecting brows indicate an unusual amount of brain power? (The reason of his request is that he is himself the possessor of an overhanging brow.)————I am sorry to disappoint BIG BEN, but it is not so. Projecting brows do not contain brain matter at all. They are filled with air, nothing but air, and give a resonance to the voice.

P. L. K.—I am not at all surprised that you letter went astray if you added "Esquire" after the name on the envelope. Foreign post-office people are so ignorant that they frequently take the word "Esquire" for a place, the consequence of which is that scores of letters go astray in the course of a year.

J. O. R.—You're quite wrong. Cats can swim if they only care to exert themselves sufficiently. The ancient Egyptians used to fish with them on the Nile according to the representations on walls and so forth, that have come down to us, and I myself have known a tabby dive into a pond when after a rat.

H. H.—The proportion of blind people in the world is 800 to every 1,000,000.

COLLECTOR.—There are no English coins known bearing the superscription of Richard Cœur de Lion. Those in circulation during his reign were struck in his father's (Henry II.) name.

S. W. asks: "How is it that one's voice has a different sound to other people than to oneself?"————The explanation is that voices are conveyed to the auditory nerve not only through the outside ear, but more directly from the inside, through the Eustachian tube as well as through the muscles and bones of the mouth and head. Thus the singer or speaker not only hears his voice from a different quarter, as we may say, but he hears besides the contraction of his own muscles.

BORONIA.—The custom of a woman assuming her husband's surname is a very ancient one, although it has not always existed. There was "Julia of Pompey," and "Octavia of Cicero." The name being a surname with us is the only difference. In Switzerland the men often adopt their wives' surname after their own.

FERGUS.—No man has the option of "cutting" a lady. If she thought proper to bow to him, and he did not raise his hat, he would forfeit all claim to be a gentleman—at any-rate, so far as manners are concerned.

AN "OLD" READER.—The only way to make the hair grey is by bleaching, and it would take years, even of this process, to do it successfully. Occasionally one reads of instances in which a person's hair becomes white in a few hours, owing to a sudden shock. You might get a friend to help you in that way, if you think the game is worth the candle.

H. C. T.—A Prince of Wales is of age from his birth, and a chair is placed for him on the right of the throne in the House of Lords.

N. R.—The first equestrian statue erected in Great Britain was that of Charles I., at Charing Cross, facing Parliament Street.

V. T. P.—Of course, there is no reason why young foals should not be eaten as well as young calves. They are quite a common article of diet in Spain, where they make a good substitute for venison.

TIMID asks: "Is a house lighted by electricity more or less likely to be struck by lightning than one lighted by gas?"————It doesn't make the slightest difference one way or the other.

H. C. E. would like to know where the line is drawn between soft and hard water?————Water is generally reckoned to be soft when it contains less than 1-5000th part of its weight of mineral ingredients, and "hard" when it contains more than 1-4000th.

MENTUS.—It is quite a fallacy to suppose that a liberal consumption of fish strengthens the brain. It is true that fish contains a certain amount of phosphorous, and that is why it is known as "brain food." The constituents of brain matter will be found in any moderately varied diet, and no special food will affect the brain one way or another in any but an infinitesimal degree.

AMICUS.—The Commissionaire Office is at 419 Strand, London, W.C., and applications should be addressed to Major Walter. Only discharged army and navy men with good characters are eligible to become commissionaires. It would be impossible to say exactly what their duties are, for they are many and various, as messengers—some being employed by the railway companies, others at clubs—or even as janitors at museums, in fact, any capacity where strict integrity is required.

DEVOIR.—If you wish to obtain a position as steward on board ship, the best thing for you to do would be to write to the Stewards' Department of one of the big companies, say, for instance, the Cunard Steamship Co., Palmerston Buildings, 93 Bishopsgate Street Within, E.C., or the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Co. at 122 Leadenhall Street, E.C. A permanent stewardship is very difficult to get, as the stewards of a vessel are generally people who offer their services in such a capacity in exchange for a free passage and their food.

POSTAL RATES.

SHORT STORIES will be sent direct from these offices, post free, to any country within the Postal Union, at the following rates, prepaid:

One Year	6s. 6d.
Half Year	3s. 3d.
Three Months	1s. 8d.

Printed and Published by C. ARTHUR PEARSON LTD., at Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Digitized by Google

KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR.

DEER RECTORY,
MINTLAW, ABERDEEN,
Nov. 8th, 1897.

From Rev. J. H. BURN.

"*My own cure with one dose of KAPUTINE was marvellous after ten weeks' incessant neuralgia.*

Thirteen years' suffering effectually and speedily relieved by KAPUTINE is the testimony of Rev. T. TAYLOR, VICAR of ST. BREDWARDS, Cornwall.

There is nothing like this wonderful KAPUTINE. Nothing Similar, Nothing as Good.

Sold by all leading Chemists, Packets of 18 Doses, 1s.

If any Difficulty, send and enclose stamped envelope to "A.M.," KAPUTINE Ltd., Huddersfield, for free samples, or 12 Stamps for a Packet of 18 doses.

KAPUTINE

THE SAFE REMEDY FOR *HEADACHE.*

EASY COMPETITION FOR BOYS AND GIRLS.

As a reward to those who assist in selling KAPUTINE, we will forward to each sender of the first ten letters opened Feb. 1st, 1898, with the missing letters of the Eight following words correctly filled in, descriptive of the qualities of KAPUTINE, £1 each; to the next ten 5s. each; to the next ten 2s. 6d. each.

K*PU*I*E	A**EEA*LE	P*RF*CT	U*EQ**LL*D
T*N*C	I*IM*T*BL*	NO*PO*SON**S	E**ECT*VE

As a guarantee that the competitor has assisted in selling KAPUTINE for Headache, each competitor must enclose four stamped outside wrappers off KAPUTINE packets. These four wrappers may be easily obtained if you persuade your friends or relations to let you buy one packet each for them, and you can then get the wrappers necessary. Show them our advertisement and you will have no difficulty in getting them to buy a packet of this wonderful remedy for Headache and Neuralgia, or you may get several friends to join at one packet. You have three months to win the prize in.

In addition to the above prizes we will give a crisp **£10 Bank of England Note** to the person sending, on February 1st, 1898, the largest number of outside wrappers bearing part of the medicine stamp. These wrappers you may obtain as suggested above.

Address: "A.M.," Kaputine Ltd., Huddersfield. ***List of Winners "Yorkshire Post," February 27th, 1898.***

KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR.

SPECIAL LIST of BOOKS

PUBLISHED FROM THE OFFICE OF *SHORT STORIES.*

Which have been so successful that they have had to be reprinted, the first large Editions having been sold out.

Second Edition now ready.

MEN WHO HAVE MADE THE EMPIRE.

By GEORGE GRIFFITH. With Sixteen Full-Page Illustrations by Stanley L. Wood. Demy 8vo, cloth gilt, gilt top, price 7s. 6d. *A Series of Twelve Life-Pictures of the men who have done most to build up the greatest Imperial Fabric that the sun has ever shone upon.*

"It is impossible not to be thoroughly interested by his treatment of the empire builders, and impressed with the lofty patriotic spirit which pervades the whole book. It is a volume for everyone to read, but it is essentially one to place within the reach of the youth of the land."—*Scotsman.*

"The book is decidedly well done. Mr. Griffith has a fresh, forcible style and a real belief in the destiny of our race. Yet, as his excellent account of Nelson shows, he is no Jingo, but has a very gentlemanly respect for the feelings of other nations whom we have at one time worsted in war. He has consulted the best authorities on the various periods of which he treats, yet does not follow any of them slavishly. . . . He has produced a thoroughly readable popular book on a subject of which too many Englishmen know far too little."—*Morning Advertiser.*

Second Edition now ready.

IN JOYFUL RUSSIA.

By JOHN A. LOGAN, Jun. Crown 8vo, cloth, bevelled boards, gilt top, with 4 Coloured Plates and 46 beautifully executed Full-Page Illustrations from Photographs, 10s. 6d.

"This book is one of the most attractive additions to the literature of travel which recent years have made. . . . Whether they hold with his roseate views or not, all who can interest themselves in Russia will be beholden to him for showing them the reverse of the old shield."—*Spectator.*

"Russia is so frequently depicted in sombre colours that it is a positive relief to find her here described as a pleasant, hospitable, and jovial country. . . . Some of the most striking pictures are those in which the author tells us of the average peasant."—*Sunday Times.*

"The book is well and profusely illustrated."—*Manchester Courier.*

Second Edition now ready, completing 11,000 Copies.

THE SKIPPER'S WOOING.

By W. W. JACOBS. Price 3s. 6d.

"In 'The Skipper's Wooing,' as in 'Many Cargoes,' Mr. W. W. Jacobs proves himself to belong to the tribe of benefactors. The story of how Captain Wilson, master and owner of the schooner *Seamew*, won the hand of Miss Annis Gething is one which few people, to use an expressive vulgarism, will be able to read 'with a straight face.' . . . Those who have read Mr. Jacob's earlier stories can readily imagine how irresistibly ludicrous are the developments of the plot."—*Spectator.*

"It contains scenes which we shall not be able to recall without a smile for many weeks to come. . . . It is a good story well told, and full of humour and drollery."—*Daily Telegraph.*

"Will induce many a hearty laugh. . . . The story is vigorous, as befits its character, but it is devoid of profanity or grossness."—*Dundee Advertiser.*

Second Edition in the Press.

THE INVISIBLE MAN.

By H. G. WELLS. Crown 8vo, cloth, price 3s. 6d.

"Will greatly enhance the reputation of a very ingenious story teller."—*Illustrated London News.*

"The story is told with that fertility of imaginative resource which has made Mr. Wells conspicuous in this domain of fiction."—*Daily Chronicle.*

"This is a wonderful story; grotesque, indeed, as the title-page has it, but deepening as it goes from the farcical to the fearful and tragical. The Invisible Man has been happy in his biographer, if in nothing else."—*Scotsman.*

"I have not been so fascinated by a new book for many a day."—MR. CLEMENT K. SHORTER in the *Bookman.*

Fourth Edition, completing 25,000, ready early in the New Year.

DAINTY DISHES FOR SLENDER INCOMES.

Being Vol. 1 of "The Isobel Handbooks," edited by "Isobel," of *Home Notes.* Cloth, *price One Shilling.*

Messrs. C. ARTHUR PEARSON LTD. will be happy to forward their List of New Season's Novels by Popular Authors, on receipt of Post Card addressed to

BOOK DEPARTMENT, Henrietta Street, Strand, W.C.

Digitized by Google

THINGS LINKED TOGETHER.

In one of his thoughtful essays on evolution Mr. John Fiske points out that the men of the River Drift and the men of the Caves never took heed of the future. To be able to meet the coarse necessities of to-day was the measure of their ambition. Hence they are known to us only by their geologic record.

The real progress of civilisation is marked by man's growing ability to understand the sequence of events and to provide against calamities. And in no department of our lives is this more important than in the management of our own bodies. Even the medical profession—the essence of conservatism—is slowly learning that the question of health is less and less a question of "curing diseases" and more and more a question of assisting nature to preserve and to renew vital force.

A case which has just been made public will serve to throw light on the point. Among those present at the annual "Feast" at Welford, near Rugby, in September, 1892, was Mr. C. H. Bland, a carpenter, residing at Welford. On the occasion mentioned he took a severe cold. Commonly colds of this sort are gotten rid of in a few days by care, without medication. In this instance, however, matters took the opposite turn, and Mr. Bland was booked for a disagreeable and dangerous experience.

From the very outset his symptoms were of a profound and alarming character. He became cold as death, had great pain in the lower part of the back, and in the left side there was a singular sense of numbness, as though a stroke of paralysis were impending. He also complained of what he called a "dragging" pain, which seemed to begin at the heart and extended to the left hip. His mental prostration was very great; he felt, he said, as if he should die.

Heroic measures were at once resorted to for his relief. Hot applications were employed, but in spite of all that could be done, Mr. Bland remained in great agony the whole of that night—of course without rest or sleep.

The next day he was seized with a violent diarrhœa, and became so weak he could not move. What followed is concisely set forth in his own words. We quote from his letter under date of December 6th, 1893.

He says: "A doctor was sent for, who said I was suffering from English cholera. I had severe griping pains in the bowels, and so violent a headache that I was unable to lie down."

We may say here that although the doctor was mistaken, as events proved, the symptoms then present went far to justify his diagnosis. His error arose from the fact that he had not taken account of *the entire case*. The truth is that the diarrhœa was, under the circumstances, natural, and, to an extent, helpful.

"In a few days," continues Mr. Bland, "I was taken with palpitation of the heart. All night long I tossed about on the bed, and from time to time shook from head to foot with chills. During the succeeding fortnight I took seven bottles of physic and got no relief. I was now so reduced that I could scarcely crawl. At last my wife persuaded me to try Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup. The first few doses relieved me, and in a week's time I got to work, as strong and hearty as ever, and have not had a day's illness since (Signed) C. H. Bland."

Now let us hark back, and quote the *first* paragraph of our friend's letter. Here it is: "I was always strong and healthy up to the summer of 1892, when I began to feel heavy, dull, and out out of sorts. My appetite died away, my food did me no good, and I was weak and tired."

That will do. The chain is perfect. The trouble began as indigestion and dyspepsia; the weakness caused by that made the cold a certainty, and the other results followed in regular order. The remedy he ultimately used (Seigel's Syrup) went to the root of the matter, set the food machinery running right, and Mr. Bland was well before he could realise it.

It is, as we said: To know the connections of things is to possess power. That's the way miracles are wrought.

Digitized by Google